LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous,
258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer,
[609] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five
years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press
[177] in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the
Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war,
as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being
unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and
the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations
undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting.
[286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the
[294] village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also
used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the
[291] older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the
younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven
wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such
as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by
178 outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village
[609] economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-
fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers
themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular
occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long
as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are
indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another
[177] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then
other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluc-
tance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that
the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover,
there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable
amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter,
[512] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is
being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can
only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that,
as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted
through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

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[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

182 and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of [342] storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 291 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly 464 considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

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[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming com-
627 pensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged)
or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be
[779] punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another
clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be
in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap,
● [291] while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear
a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often
older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal
uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding
his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
562 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow 562
men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven' while a woman
who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their [571]
spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet
inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose [301]
rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost [302]
an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while
men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and [291] ●
never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's [195]
speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not
expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, [482]
men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back
or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women
keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although [195]
both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have
different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as [201]
a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women
grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or
shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry [illegible] the [152]
woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wi[illegible]i,
ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threa- [578]
tening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a [302]
woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different
invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their [195]
speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do
not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque [794]
as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support
for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-
religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about [156]
pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere.
It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the [193]
village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person [197]
feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban [369]
dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at
each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by 834
the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

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[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

771 any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

177 The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

177 However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing,
as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the
369 writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pat-
tern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially
amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the
cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of
Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of
city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has
ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new
[291] generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban,
manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured
woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom.
On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables
[252] and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and
spicing it.

177 The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige
369 values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest
554 houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own
houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan
[514] or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

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[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.

[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

177

good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 369
'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane 554
and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can
afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for 248
social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white- 249
washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in 342
contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The
same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage,
crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside 788
decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return
from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have 177
been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been 369
affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement
and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion 562
in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. 291
This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being
stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more 521
inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude
towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk 626
about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpre-
tive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium 208
for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are
aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious en- 771
lightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction
from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy
of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most 788
of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

853 asked to count the number of times she suckled her child over a week, reported that it varied between six and fifteen times a day. The time of each nursing varies, but it is admitted that the louder or longer the child cries the greater the time the mother expends on its suckling.

[091] The dress of women actually helps in nursing the child without delay immediately he cries. Either through the dress neck opening, which is always cut low, or the two openings, one on each breast, the mother extrudes her breast for the child. Sometimes in the presence of female strangers, or very close male relatives, the child is nursed while covered with the top garment, the breast and the child hidden between the two garments. The mother usually offers the nipple between her middle and index fingers to the child who eagerly leans towards it and grasps it. The suckling child is allowed to play freely with his mother's breast, even while alternating from one breast to another. A mother nurses her child while she is sewing, spinning, cooking or even eating. When the child grows older it can induce its mother to nurse it by rubbing its head on her breast or by inserting its hand into one of the openings.

Usually the child suckles till it is satisfied, but it also happens that the nipple is withdrawn from it whenever the mother feels that it is satisfied, or when she has to engage on an immediate task, to give it the breast later. It is worthwhile noting that the child gets the breast either when it needs it or when the breast is full, and it is withdrawn from it when it is satisfied, or when its mother feels that she has got to withdraw her breast when circumstances of her work demand it. Yet the need of the child, even theoretically, is the overriding factor in suckling. Occasions of tantalizing with the breast are reported when mothers show or play about with their breast for their children, the game invariably ending with the suckler getting the breast. It is forbidden (haram) to deprive the child of the breast once it has been tantalized. Some women in the village are known to be neglectful of their children with regard to nursing. They are reported as saying that if they attend wholly to their children, as other women do, they would not be able to attend to their home tasks. Their justification for this is implicit in their famous saying, 'Even dogs, after all, have brought forth offspring'.

862 The period of nursing, on the whole, varies from child to child and from mother to mother, depending on the health of the child or the arrival of the next baby, or on the mother's milk. No child is ever weaned before the end of the first year. Some children are suckled for two years and a few as long as three years. The average period for most children is between a year and a year and a half. It is reported also that very few mothers nurse two children at the same time, and this custom was more common about twenty years ago, when the period of suckling was longer on the whole.

853
842 It is felt in the village that there is a definite relationship between lactation and future pregnancy, and if a woman wishes to become pregnant

high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness 865
is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing 593
them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to
say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling [866]
relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who
come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of 857
different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after 561
the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism
for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the 858
most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's
representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more
attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision,
and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children
chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment
between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment
of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex
or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes
to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic
activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son
should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention
is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their [865]
daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood.
It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence
during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer
period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to
approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with 855
the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its
mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage
of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an
unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this
neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out [754]
with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear
attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's
appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter
an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The
renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is [291]
related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing [882]

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[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951. [865]

291 suitable clothes. Grown-up boys and girls who wear torn clothes which might expose their pudenda, are open to shame and gossip amongst other 386 children.

With regard to clothes, it is noticed that children, up to the age of nine 291 or ten, usually wear a one-piece garment called a gallabiah, with a head-cap (takia) for boys, and a coloured head-cloth for girls (mudawaria). Children do not dress like their fathers or mothers, who wear two-piece garments at least, always with a black over-garment, especially when they go out of the house for a gathering or a visit. Yet after about the age of ten, both boys and girls tend to approximate their parents in their dress, with the exception of the black over-garment. Boys, for example, wear pants under their gallabiahs, while the girls wear two gallabiahs when they are outside the house.

165 [855] The fact that the children after weaning receive a decreasing amount of care and attention is a contributory factor to the high death-rate of children. In Silwa, as judged from the health centre records during the last three years, the highest mortality figure is for the children between two [163] and five years old. For the country as a whole, the birth-rate ranks among the highest in the world.[1] For the years between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate per thousand in the population was 42·2, 41·6, 40·8, 38·2, 39·6 respectively. The following table shows the death-rate according to different age groups with those of less than five years giving the highest percentages.[2]

TABLE II

Death-rate according to different age-groups

Age	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
less than one year	22·22	22·33	23·40	23·50	23·20
from 1–4 years	28·20	25·0	26·81	25·30	25·80
„ 5–9 „	3·90	3·84	3·92	6·04	3·34
„ 10–19 „	3·66	3·84	4·06	4·22	4·43
„ 20–29 „	3·94	4·23	3·98	4·06	4·25
„ 30–39 „	5·05	5·51	5·09	5·02	5·37
„ 40–49 „	4·84	5·38	4·93	4·79	5·18
„ 50–59 „	4·50	5·06	4·68	4·55	4·86
„ 60–69 „	4·87	5·48	5·05	4·85	5·26
„ 70–79 „	5·11	5·64	5·17	5·00	5·45
„ 80–89 „	5·34	5·49	5·15	4·99	5·29
„ 90 and over	7·90	7·87	7·18	7·10	7·06
unidentified ages	0·32	0·299	0·64	0·525	0·405

[1] *Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations*, 1942–4.

[2] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 32, from which these percentages are worked out.

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

882 With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the
[826] house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

883 Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

882 Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends.
885 Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually
581 increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unham-
888 pered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for
● [291] instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse them-
857 selves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

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882 [1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl composed of two black 584
outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers. [291]

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes. 585 431

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: 585 [515] [533]

How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
How we are admiring her.
The snake in his hole
has spent a sleepless night.
He kept one eye on her forehead,
and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

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[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. A [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

A [See category 116, P. 193-- 4ug 195 LYST]

872 villagers consider the establishment of a primary school in their village as a sign of 'blessedness' enabling their boys to find some scope for work in government jobs, especially as the land resources are becoming increasingly limited. As one of the villagers put it, 'It is free education for which one had to go previously to Aswan or Cairo'. The new school accommodates 138 pupils in three grades. As expected, it has affected the number of boys who go to the Kuttab, the numbers of one of them declining from forty to fourteen. It has also affected the number of boys in the elementary school, especially those in the third grade who, instead of remaining in the school, preferred to go to the second or third grade of the primary school. The two following statements express the feeling of the boys about the new school:

[177] [291] A boy of twelve said: 'We like the new school, as we wear suits (European), which are much nicer than the gallabiahs which we used to wear in the elementary school. The former is better than the latter in its lessons, order, and cleanliness.'

Another boy of eleven said: 'The primary school has more knowledge to teach. We wear an "effendi" suit, warmer and more beautiful than the gallabiah. We shall become government officials when we pass our examinations. Moreover, there are no girls in our new school.'

The boys and girls of the elementary school, in all the ten statements received, envy those boys of the primary school their 'effendi' dress, but equally assert that primary pupils are not better off than they in any way. They say: 'We have the same books and learn the same lessons, and are capable of challenging them in reading, or in the multiplication tables.'

After discussing the three educational institutions in the village, it is 212 necessary to review the state of literacy in general. The writer could not possibly make a survey of the literate people in Silwa, but thinks that their percentage would certainly be little less than the average for the whole country. The following table shows the percentage of male and female literates for Egypt as a whole since 1907.[1]

TABLE VII

Literacy in Egypt, male and female

Year	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*
1907	5·4	9·8	1·1
1917	7·9	13·6	2·1
1927	13·8	22·9	4·7
1937	18·6	26·8	10·5

The general census for the year 1947 has not been published yet, but it

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[1] The table is made by calculating the percentage for the figures given in the general census for the respective years.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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[Facing page 1]
Frontispiece

ROPE-MAKING AT AKHMÎM

The man seated in the centre of the picture is twisting the split and softened strands into a thin cord. See p. 161.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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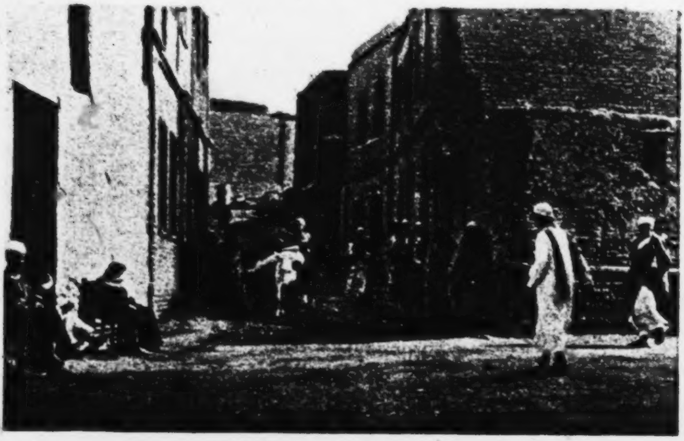
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they 363
can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along 361
which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village 286
weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being 353
attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.



[363]
[291]
[342]
[516]

FIG. 8 A VILLAGE STREET

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous 443
village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sound- [533]
ing to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. 443
From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been 454
made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

443 454 carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

347 789 531 554 The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

[363] [137] [342] ● [291]

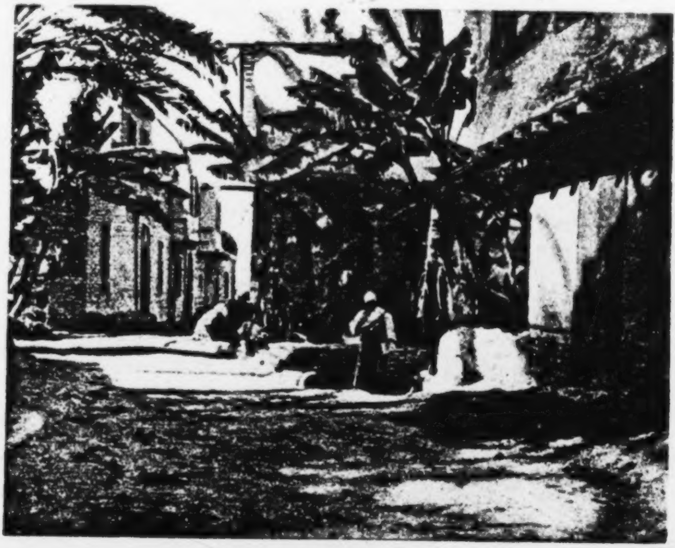


FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

744 The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

000 A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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● 291
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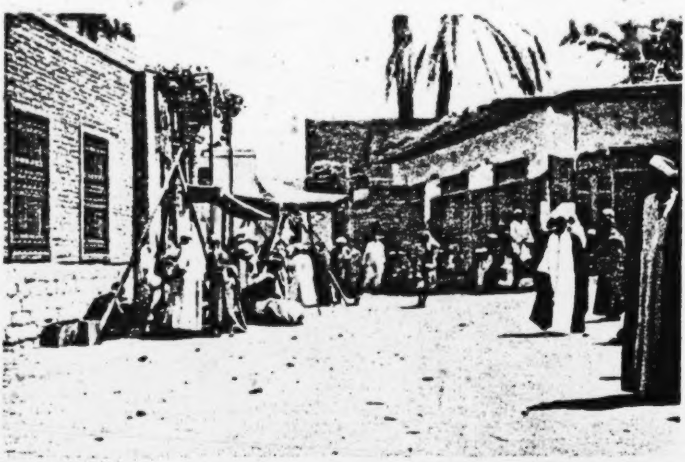

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro-788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con-755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

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[1] See Chapter X.

for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according 312 823 to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from 755 Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from 773 the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of [041] ● Fayūm Province, and [516] into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the 823 origin of the canal, 789 its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

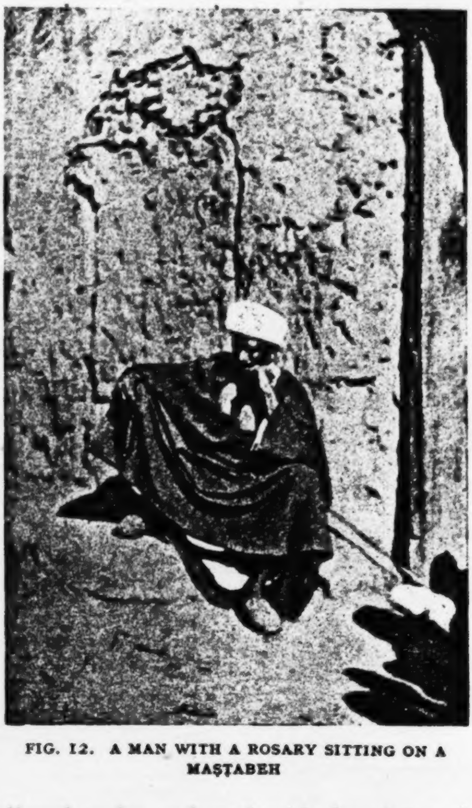

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] 773 It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

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[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriage- 562
able age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After [858]
marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion
varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than [585]
among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may
be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must 562
be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among 565
the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em- 521
577
phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women
are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception
of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a
room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother
does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of
about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother
objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village,
except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the [312]
water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He
told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

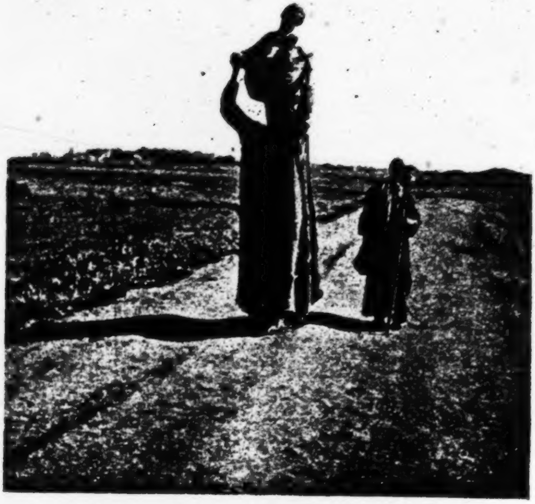

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

[891]
[482]

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede 586
for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved 428
to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained 581
his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in [291] ●
an even better position than [142]
her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife 152
(Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her 593
wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

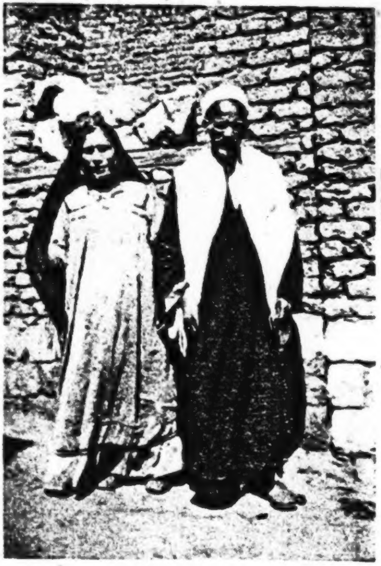

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's [607]
husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

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[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

[page 41]

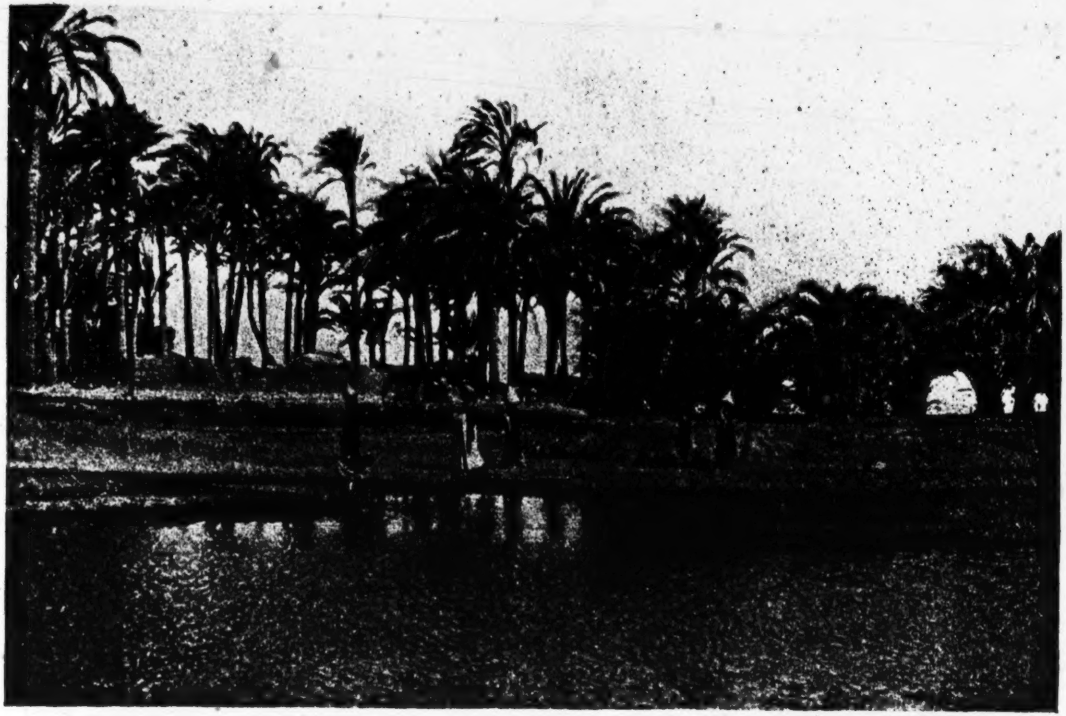

FIG. 16. WOMEN CARRYING WATER-POTS ON THEIR HEADS

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this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing 304 is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes [755] done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on 304 755 either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one [463] [291] side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

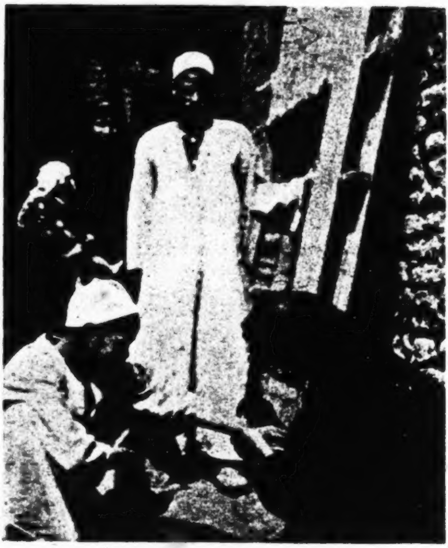

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed 304 755 753 about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another 000

302 form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

[765] After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

[291] An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. [593] [832] Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

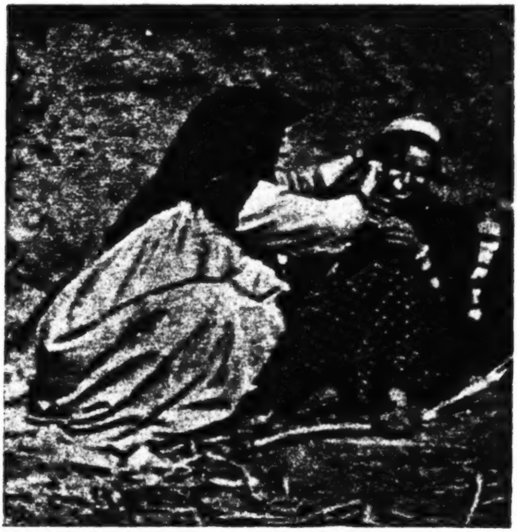

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat 302
painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle,*" and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony [278]
(Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, [415]
called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt
point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure [755]
for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent 784
nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use 853
scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule 302
the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom 753
I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit 291 ●
that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses 515
which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women
walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, [754]
dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach 291
almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either
to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a [462]
long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳîyeh 291
Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several 301
gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of 554

291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by look-
ing at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and
have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement
myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the
gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me
in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they
822 may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress
765 of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place
589 of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband
died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a
black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
302 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death
of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
776 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
774 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

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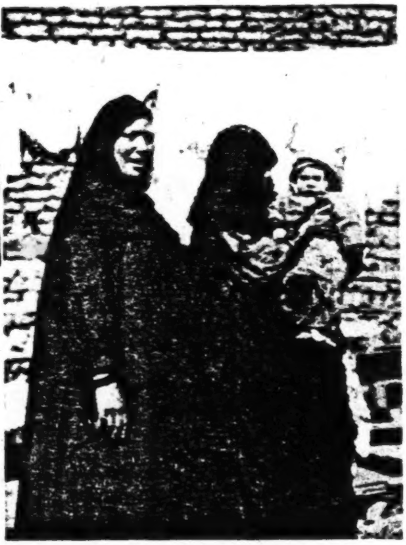

[854]
[291]
[142]

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FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
[153] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
164 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this
515 she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

854 for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a 852 metal jug with a long spout called an *ibriḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The [776] water is called *moiyet el-malāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels [774] meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibriḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibriḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibriḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who [776] would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibriḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

● [291]

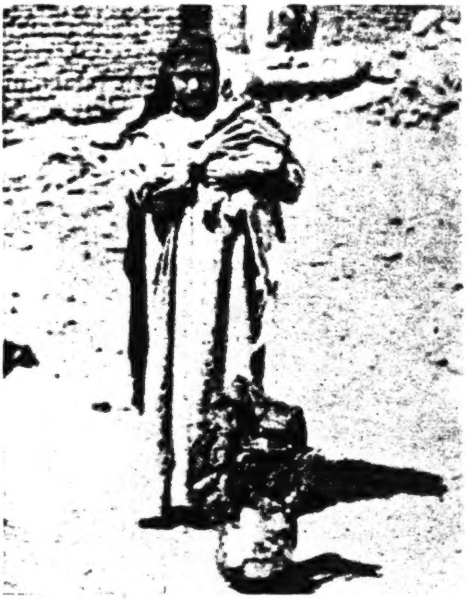

FIG. 36. YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRĪḲ

852 On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
302 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize,
bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
241 given to the father to
scatter over his fields.
This is a fertility charm,
and is believed to ensure
789 his having good crops.

In addition to the
charms mentioned above,
the child sometimes has
another one made of
[463] thick iron wire twisted
● [291] into a particular shape
[285] (Fig. 37). This is also
hung round the child's
neck, but only so if,
when it cries, it clenches
its hands and shakes
itself.

In some parts of
789 Upper Egypt the fol-
852 lowing mixture is put
into a child's eyes by
the midwife on the
seventh day. The woman brings an onion
with her and squeezes
the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the
[856] feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the
child wide open and beautiful eyes.

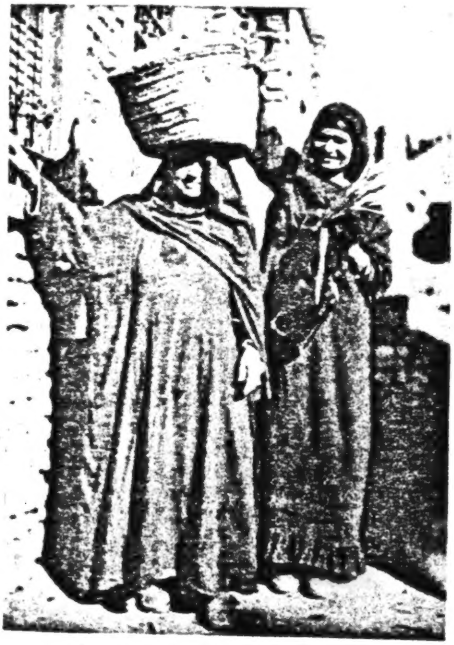

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

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[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

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778

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

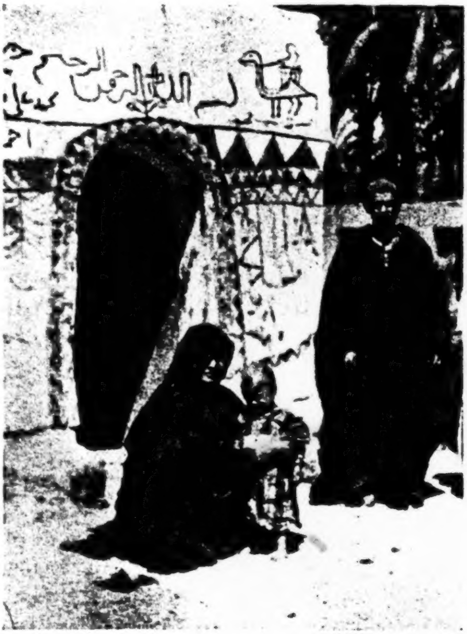

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

F
E
[291] ●
[532]
[142]

F
E
[262]

F
C
[465]
E
[152]

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[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

inclined to pay the bride-price, partly because the girl had been 832 married before, but chiefly, I think, because he did not want to part with the money. The love-stricken young man, who had already got his portion of his father's house allotted to him in view of his marriage later on, would often enter these apartments to clean and tidy them, meditating the while on the girl whom he so desired.

The effect of this device on a man is, I am told, always the same; and even if he is already betrothed to another girl he will break off his engagement.

In Egypt betrothal is almost, 584 if not quite, as binding as marriage, and the people speak of the dissolving of such a tie as a divorce. A man who has been affected in the way described above will, if he is [142] betrothed, pay a large sum of [291] money to get rid of the girl whom he was originally to have married. I was told that the man is quite unaware that a charm has been used to catch him. He just gets mad about the girl without any knowledge that such a trap has been set for him.

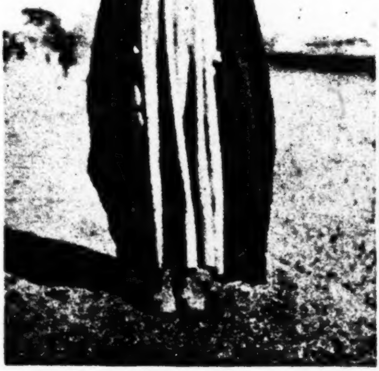

FIG. 41. THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF A LOVE-CHARM

On the other occasion the mother and brothers of a young unmarried girl were very anxious that she should secure a husband, 581 but hitherto none had been forthcoming. One of my servants, a young man of twenty-two, had been seen several times by the various members of this family and by the girl herself. He is rather a nice-looking young man, and, moreover, has a certain amount of land and a good house. The eldest brother of the girl had been to my servant's village and visited his home, and had seen that his family was very superior to most of the other villagers. One day when my servant was walking through the garden of the 832 house which had been lent to me by the Government he noticed

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥîn*. E 585 789

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

E 586

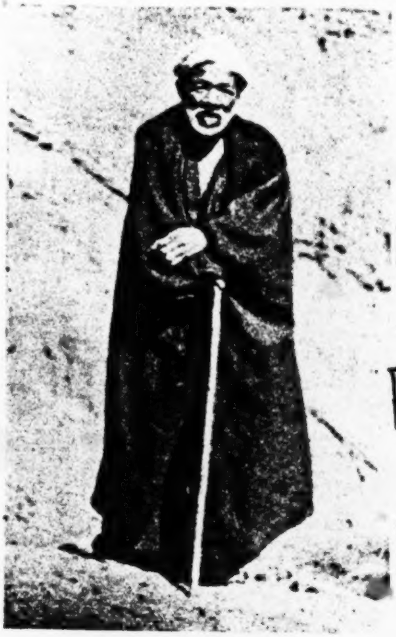

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

F [842]

F [291] [192]

F 887 586

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

887 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree,
586 they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the
woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help
him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in
any case, at his age he
ought no longer to be
contemplating marriage,
but had better direct his
thoughts to preparing
himself for death. I was
told by some of the villagers
that the divorced
791 wife had been to a magician,
832 who had written a
charm to make the old
man mad with love for
her. Nearly every time
[291] I went to this village I
found the old man mooning
431 about the street near
152 the house where his divorced
wife was staying,
and the villagers told me
that he was always sitting
there, in the hope of
getting a glimpse of the
woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of
meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I
made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking
woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite
amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just
before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former
584 marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was
negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If
this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

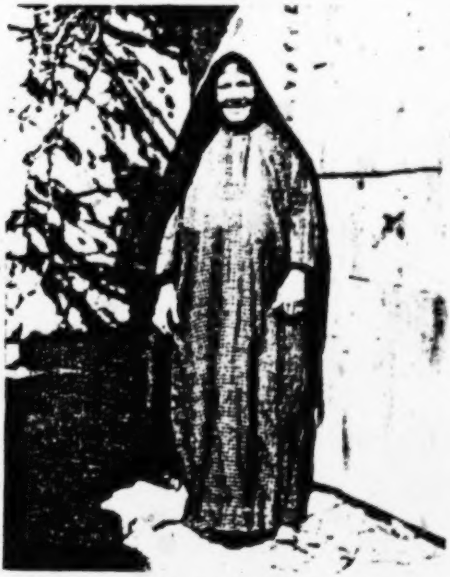

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this
somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood
to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand,
with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291]
[142]

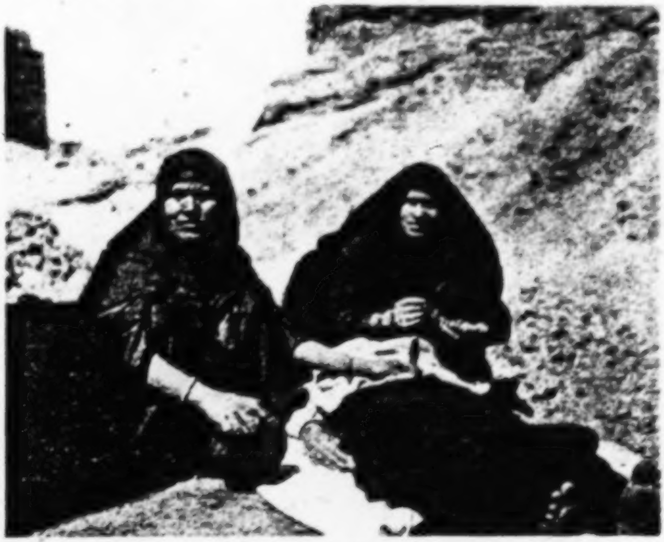

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus
[774] frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her
dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if
842 possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well.
After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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C 842 789 been sitting and proceeded to lift the jar from off the woman's stomach. It took a very strong and somewhat lengthy pull to do this, and as it was finally removed there was a resounding pop, like an explosion. C [827] It was explained to me that one possible reason for the woman not having conceived was that she had "wind in her stomach." The noise caused by the removal of the jar was this wind coming away, as they supposed, from the stomach through the navel. F •[291] The performance was repeated two or three times, and on each occasion when the jar was pulled away the noise was very loud, and the two attendant women remarked on how much wind the patient had in her stomach. As I have said, the woman who removed the jar had to exercise her full strength to get it away, and this part of the performance must have caused the patient a good deal of discomfort, if not actual pain, for her stomach was dragged up with the jar in the effort to remove it, the suction, of course, being caused by the vacuum created by placing the jar over the lighted 'candle.' I was sorry to hear, when making inquiries later on, that the operation had failed to produce the desired effect !

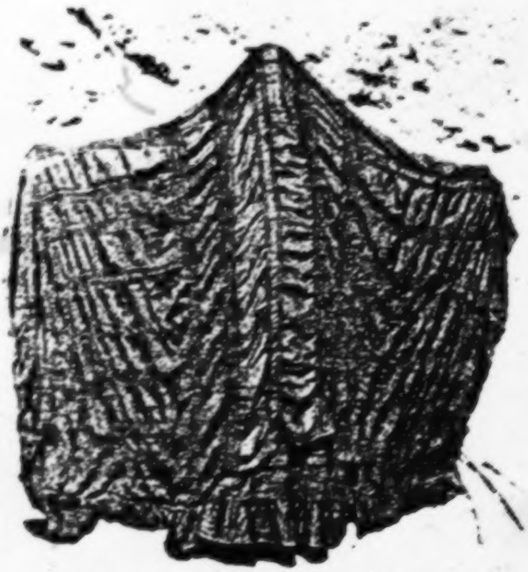

FIG. 47. WOMAN WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS COMPLETELY ENVELOPED IN A TŌB

F 842 789 Childless women frequently have recourse to this fertility rite, at any rate in some parts of Egypt. I do not yet know if it is a widely

842 189 spread custom, for, being a somewhat private operation, it would not be talked about freely, and one must have been on very familiar terms with the people for a long time before being invited to be present on such an occasion.

842 189 291 Quite recently I was present at another rite performed by two childless women. A third woman held a long, wide piece of black material over her head and outstretched arms, so that she was completely covered (Fig. 47). This garment is called a *tōb*, and is the one worn by women out of doors. The woman who thus officiates must be one who has had children that have died. One of the childless women then crept underneath the *tōb* and walked round the officiant seven times, always keeping well under the garment (Fig. 48). The second woman then followed suit. No woman who has walked round another woman in this way must in her turn thus hold the *tōb* for another, for if she did the benefit she had hoped to secure by walking under this garment would be taken from her.

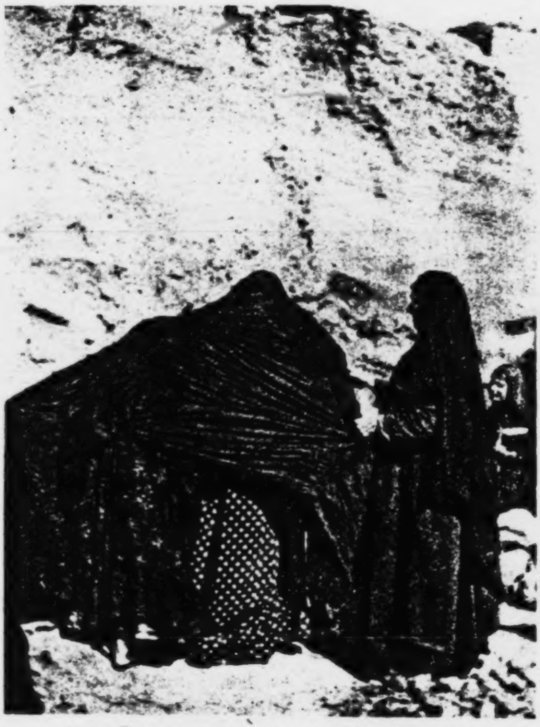

FIG. 48. WOMEN CREEPING UNDER THE TŌB

842 189 123 These two women, hearing that I was coming to the village in which the ceremony was to take place, delayed carrying it out until I could be present, in the hope of getting the additional benefit of

764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with [792] the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291]
[852]

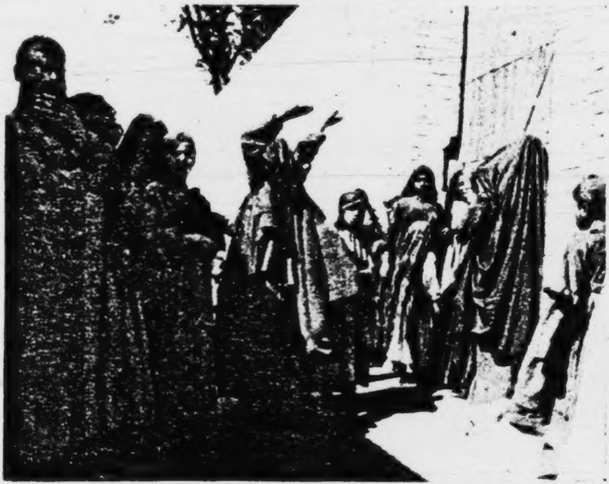

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 825 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
775 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī ḥaseneh, yā sitt*" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

[291]
[769]
[516]

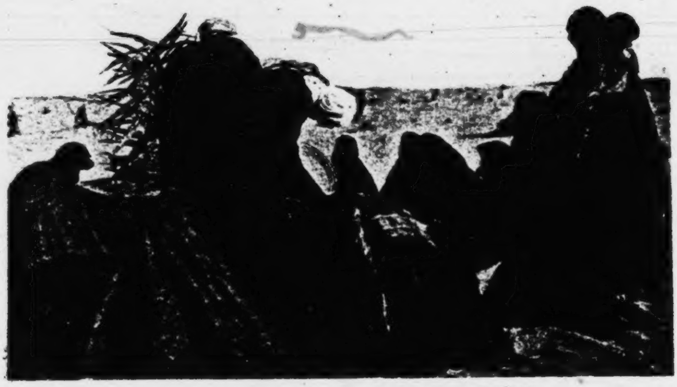

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
775 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

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The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

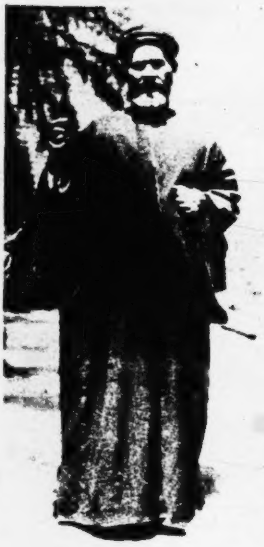

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

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[291] ●
[778]

E
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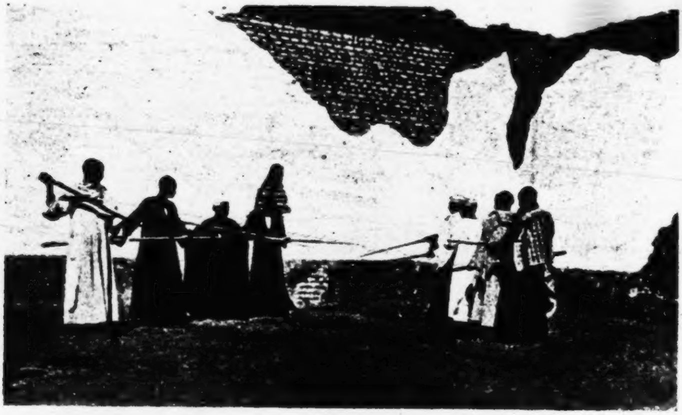
788
783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *ʻarīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *ʻarīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the 628
friendliest grins. 152
689

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which
took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. 527
One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with 628
the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The 624
chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities.



[411]
[291]

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabâbīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful
in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing [411]
right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the 323
woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior 462
ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration.

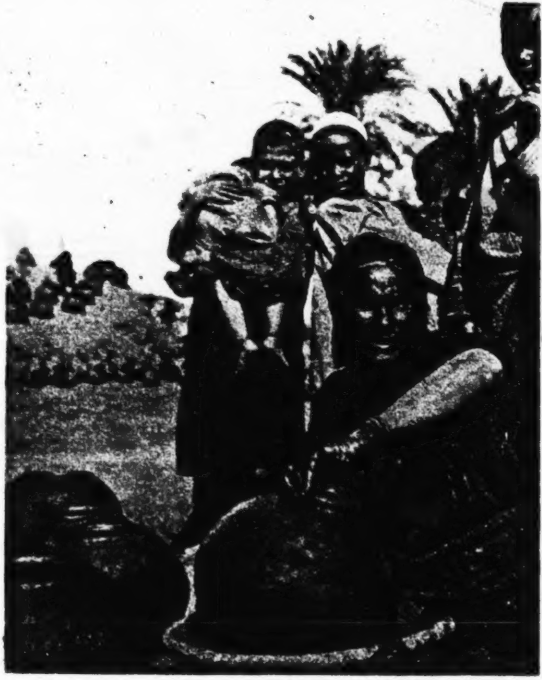


FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

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[291] ●
[142]
[415]

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel.

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed 323
is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* 415
Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziyār* (singular *zīr*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water,

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[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

323 sprinkles on it a certain quantity of chaff, and then puts a large
415 lump of clay on it to form a strong base for the pot. When smaller vessels are to be made the process is different, as will be seen later. He then takes some more clay and forms it into a thick, flat sausage,
323 which he coils round the lump of clay forming the base (Fig. 63). As he rotates the wheel the pot begins to take form, the potter drawing up the clay as he works to make the sides. Having completed the work so far, he takes another lump of clay and presses it on to the base to strengthen it still further in this part. To increase the size of the vessel more coils of clay are superimposed round the pot, one at a time, the man pouring a little water from his hand over each added roll to effect a join. This is repeated until half the intended height of the vessel is attained, when cords are coiled round it spirally with the aid of the wheel (*cf.* Fig. 77). This half-pot is now removed from the wheel and placed on the ground, where it is left to dry for several hours. When sufficiently hardened it is again placed on the wheel, and the upper part completed by superimposing thick sausages of clay as before, the shape of the vessel being obtained by decreasing the length of each additional roll of clay. The *zīr*, having been finished off with a

[415]
[142]
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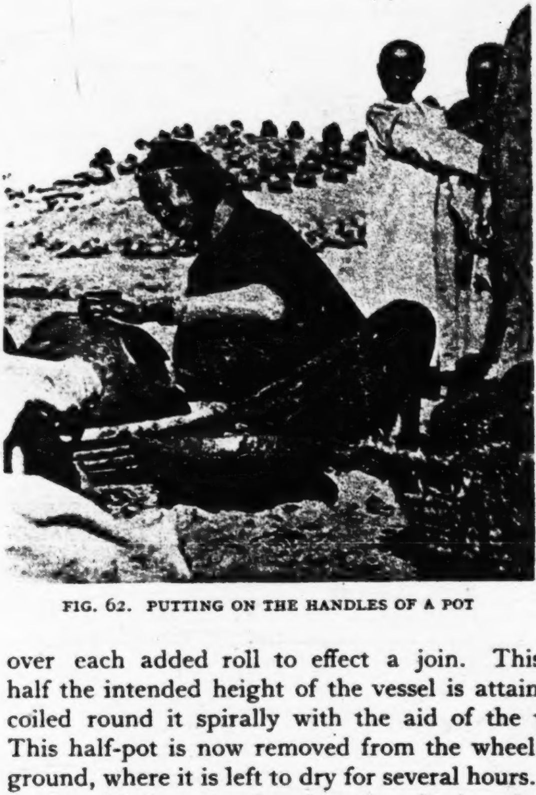


FIG. 62. PUTTING ON THE HANDLES OF A POT

thick rim, is now put to sun-bake again, the rope being still left coiled round the lower half. No rope is put round the upper part, but large nicks are impressed in the clay with the thumbnail just below the rim.

After the sun-baking is completed the vessels are placed in a kiln to be fired, the cords being previously removed (Fig. 64), though the impress made by the cord remains on the pot even after baking.

A pattern similar to that effected by the rope is employed for the decoration of pots in many countries; but this practice of strengthening and supporting the weakest part of the pot, or the part which receives the greatest pressure, by coiling rope round it probably suggested this decoration in the first instance. When such a practice has died out, possibly owing to greater skill achieved by the potters, the pattern originally made by the impress of the cord upon the pot is imitated for purely decorative purposes.[1] With the Egyptian potters the use of the cord is, as I have already stated, simply to support the thicker and heavier part of the *zîr* while sun-baking, and the impress left on the vessel does not seem to have any æsthetic value attached to it.

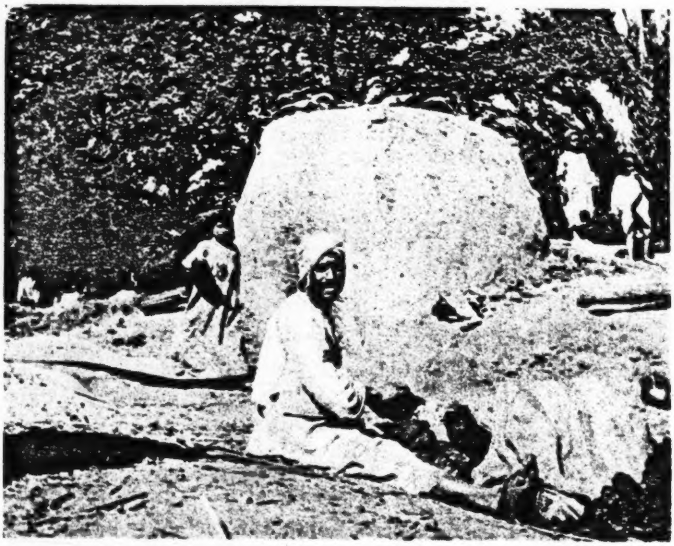
FIG. 63. COILING THE FLAT SAUSAGE OF CLAY ROUND THE LUMP OF CLAY ALREADY ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL

---

[1] I am indebted to Mr Henry Balfour, Curator of the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, for this suggestion.

drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with 323
thick sides.

Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar. The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small



[291] ●
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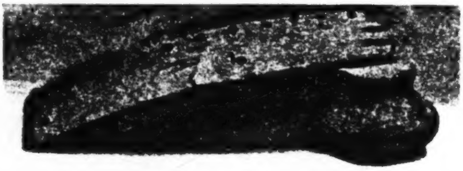
FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND



[413]

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

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[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

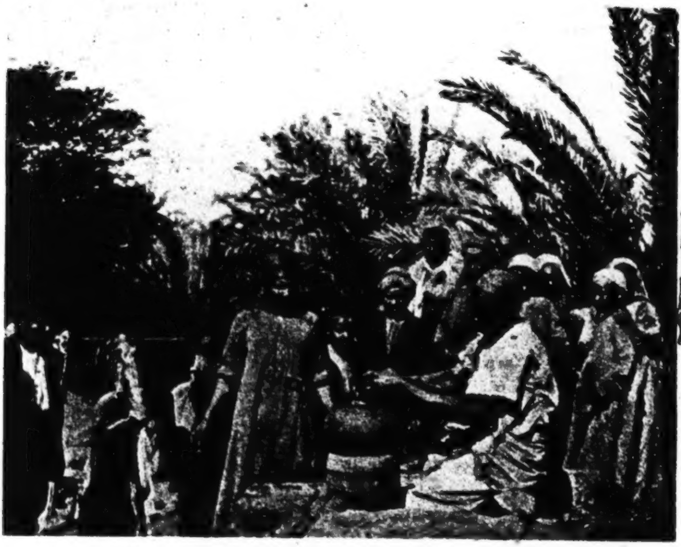
The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

● [291]
[413]
[137]

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

323
563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*balālīṣ*, singular *ballāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ballāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into 323 563



[137] [291] [142] [415] ●

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement [413] made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

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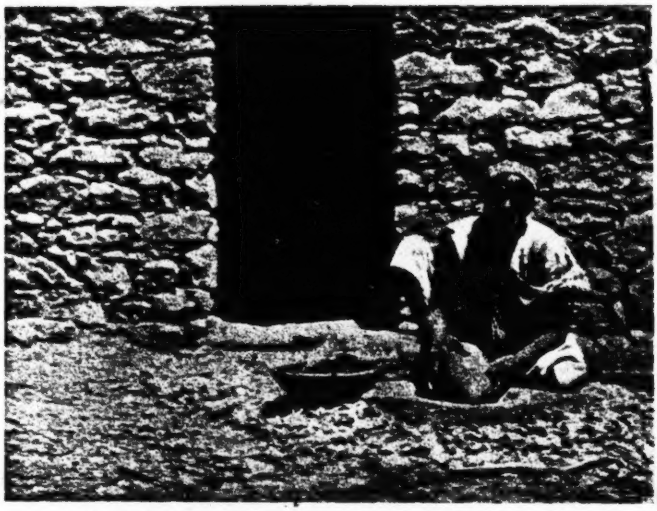

FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

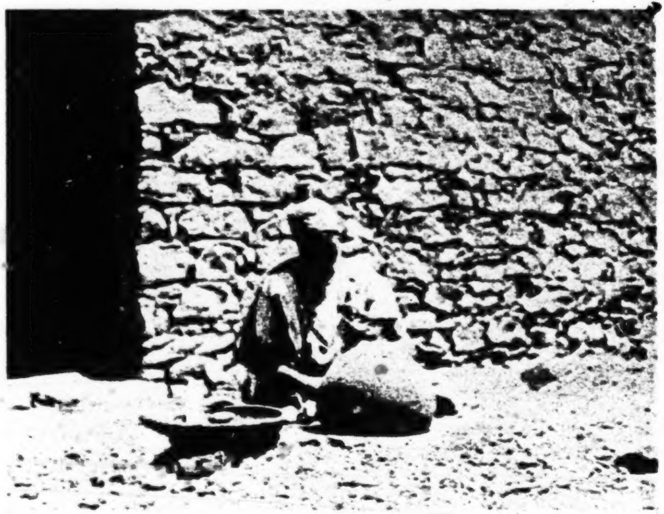

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

323 the vessels; otherwise the pots would crack while being baked in the kiln.

When the pots have thus been dried in the sun they are handed over to a woman, who takes each one in turn and smooths the base of the vessel with a knife, cutting off the superfluous clay. The pots are then returned to the disks and left to sun-bake again for two or three days. They are then passed on to another woman, who paints them all over with a slip (Fig. 73). This is made of [386] powdered *tafl* (a yellow clay) mixed with water. The pots are now left to dry for ten minutes or so, when they are passed on to another set of women and girls, who polish them both inside and out with a smooth pebble of basalt (Fig. 74 and p. 152, Fig. 80). When this process is completed they are handed on to a woman [531] [386] artist, who paints them all over with simple designs (Fig. 75). The paint, which is made of a material called ***mughreh*** (red ochre), pounded up and mixed with water, is applied with a feather. The designs are freehand, and are put on very rapidly, without any pattern to work from.

● [291]

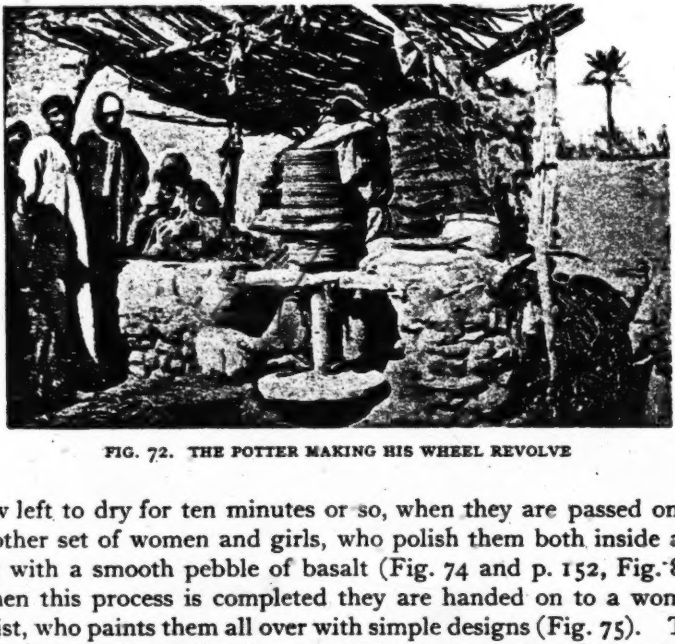

FIG. 72. THE POTTER MAKING HIS WHEEL REVOLVE

The pots are now ready for the kiln, where they are fired as soon as the oven is ready for them, but they can be put on one side for a short time without any detriment if the preparation of the kiln is not complete.

[Text continues on p. 148]

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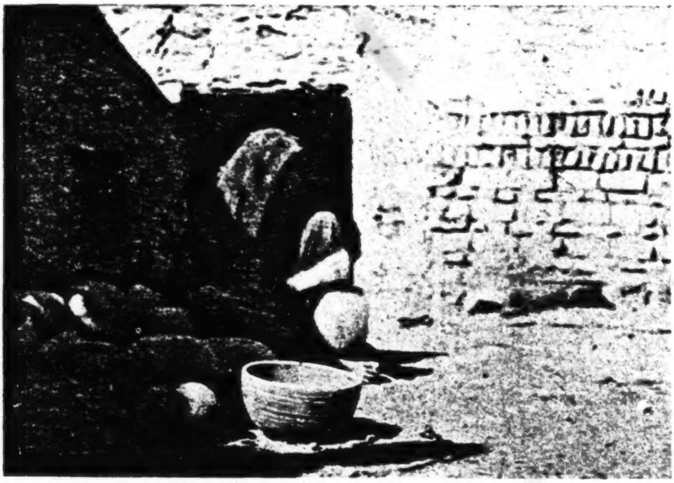

FIG. 73. WOMAN PUTTING THE SLIP ON A POT

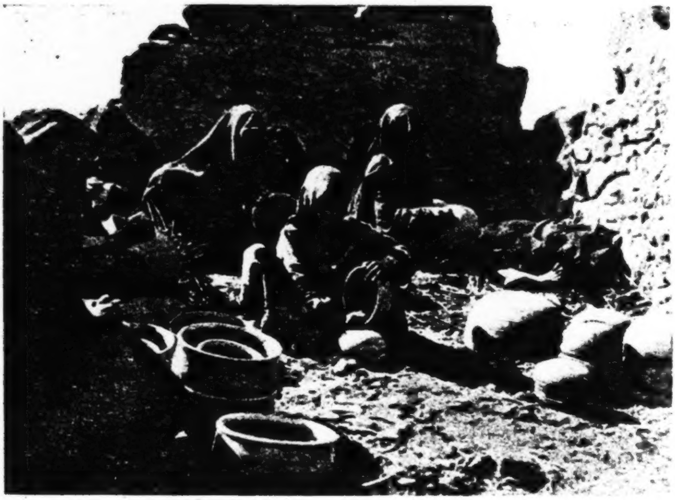

FIG. 74. POLISHING THE POTS

[page 147]

323 372 Dried maize-stalks (*bûṣ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

[531] [291] [415] [516]

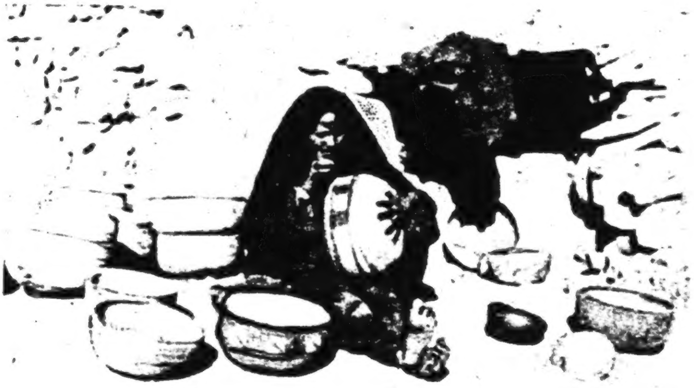

FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

323 On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every house- 372
wife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this 857
fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses.

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain 285
kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket [462]
at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture.

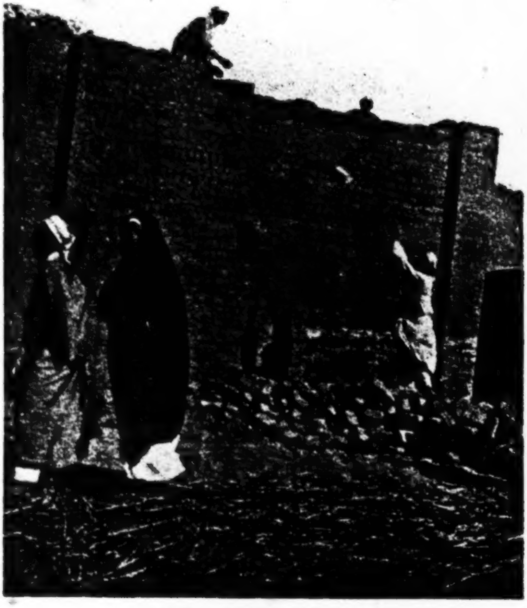

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

[340]
[291]
[331]

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general [482]
use is called the *maktaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the

know if any physical anthropologist has discovered this peculiarity in the head-form of Egyptian women or not. 142

The *maktaf* is made, as I have said, of palm-leaves. These are torn off the main stem and split into the desired width, and are then woven into a very long plait. Extra leaves are constantly incorporated, till the necessary length is completed. Any very narrow strands left over as useless for this purpose are carefully put on one side, to be utilized in the following manner. When the plait is completed the basket-maker takes these strands and forms them into a cord by twisting them together between the palms of his hands. He then takes a large iron needle, which he threads with this cord, and proceeds to form the basket by sewing the plait into a spiral. The cord is inserted through the plait in such a way that it forms a thick spiral rib round the basket (Figs. 84 and 86). The work is often so cleverly done that, unless one has witnessed the whole process, it is exceedingly difficult to discover how the basket has been made. Two rope handles are attached to each basket (Fig. 83), the rim of which is often strengthened with the 285

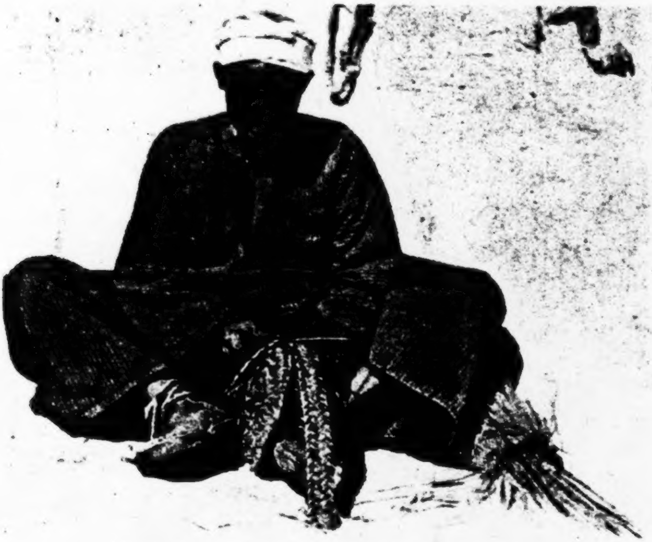

FIG. 84. SEWING THE PLAIT INTO A SPIRAL

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286 294 confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

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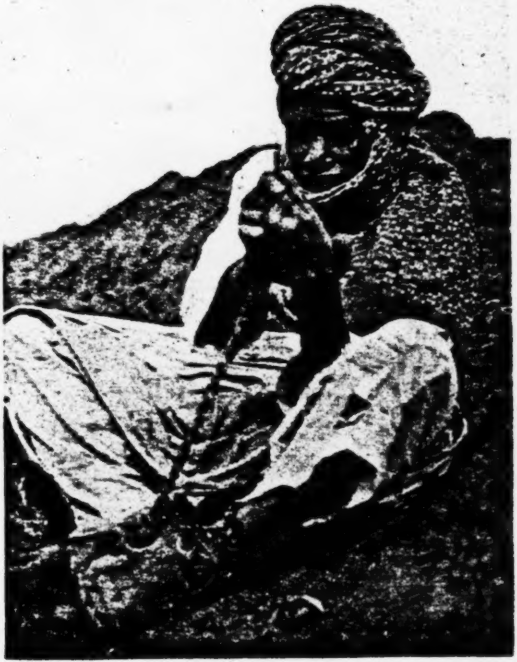

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

000 Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

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[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done
by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have 283
seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, 462
when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman
spinning yarn.

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made 252
by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the 462
latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

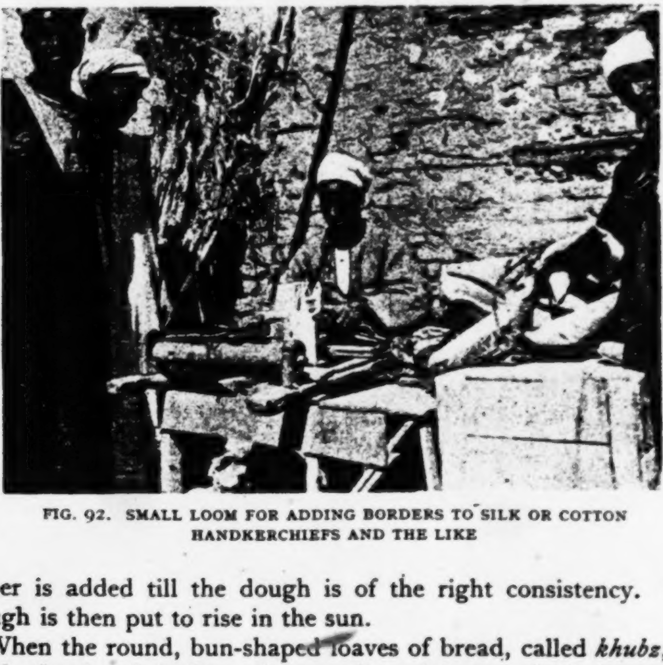

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

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[142]

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are
made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which
are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven [554]
(Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which [262]
is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants.

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The ' fan ' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

252 462 [392] oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is
262 252 crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

[286] [291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

443 [423] Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

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[262] [1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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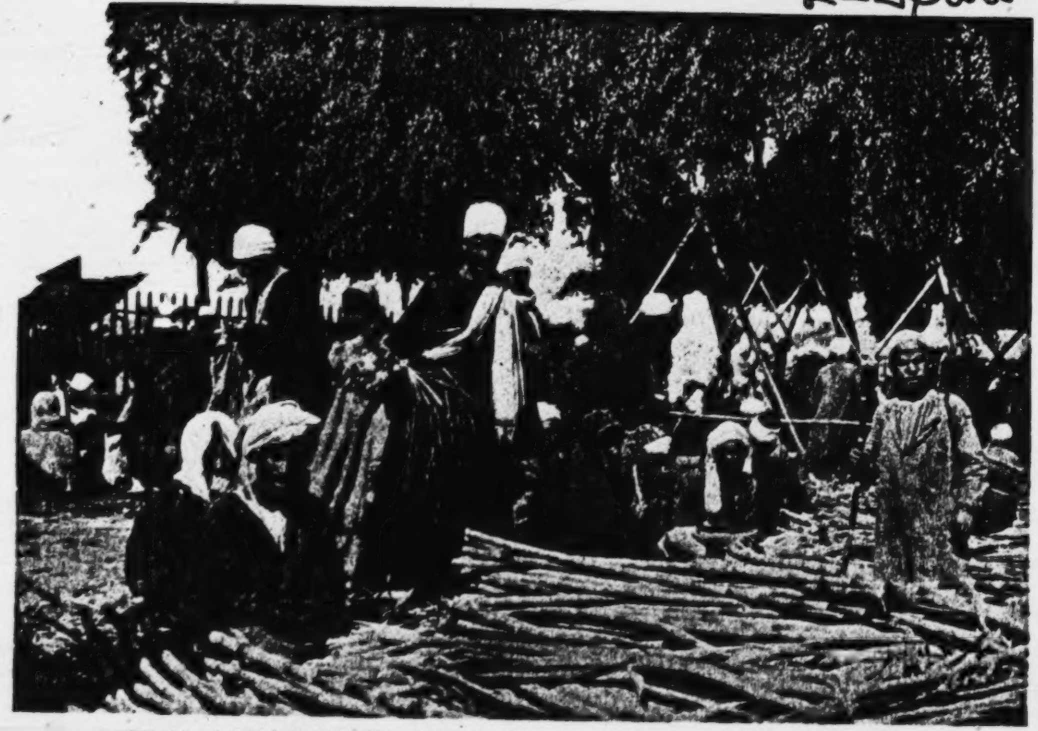


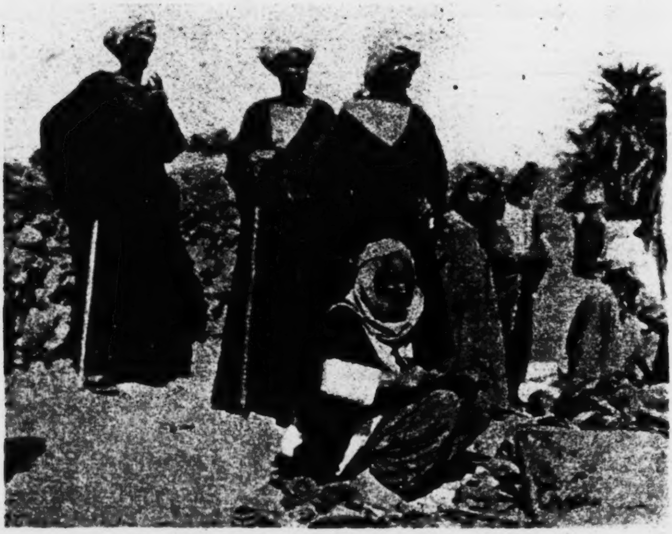
FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be 443
seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male 516
relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market 462
of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in
cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, 415
and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their [482]
heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be 443



[294]
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[516]

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, [439]
in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*,
singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using [326]
for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot 443
on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale
on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front [413]
of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, de- [299]
scribed in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of
musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the [534]

---

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

243 431 264 789 threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over
789 782 776 around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

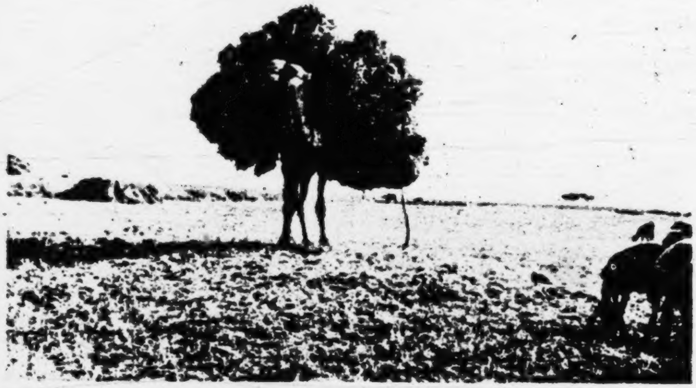

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

[231] [492]

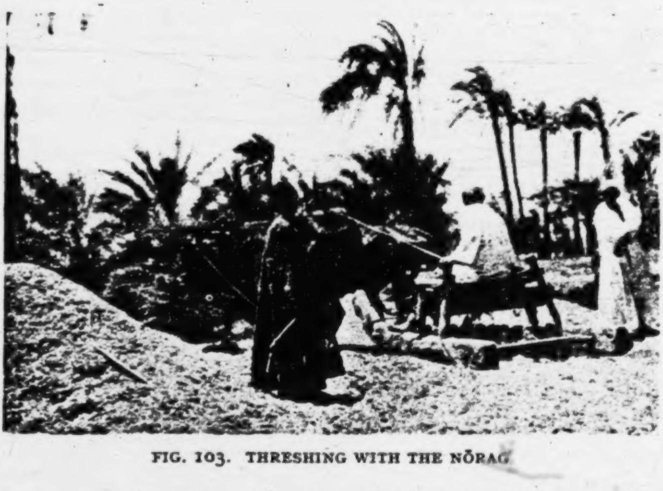

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

● [907] [291]

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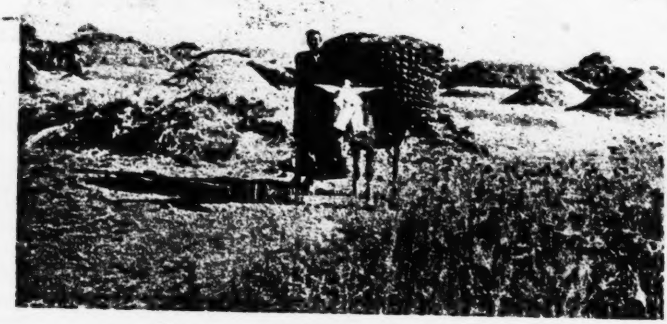

[992]
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[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *ʿafārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *ʿafārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

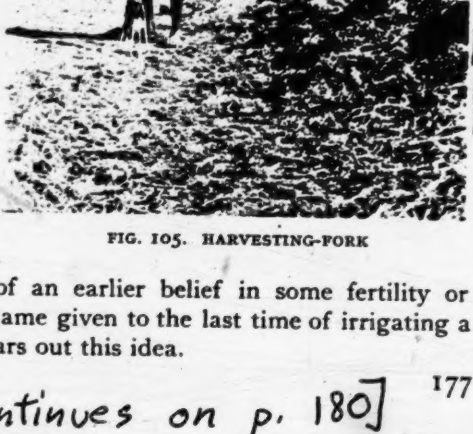

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FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

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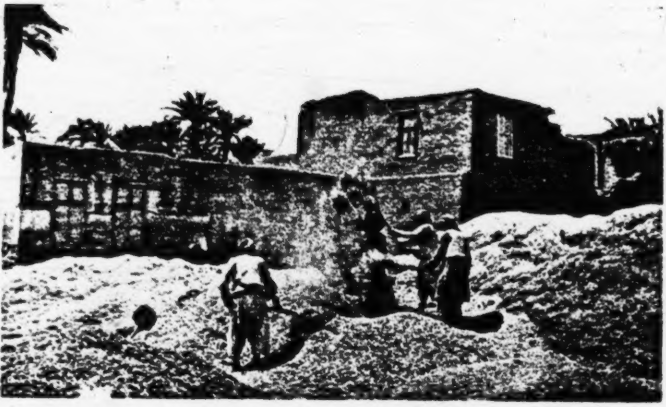

FIG. 106. WINNOWING

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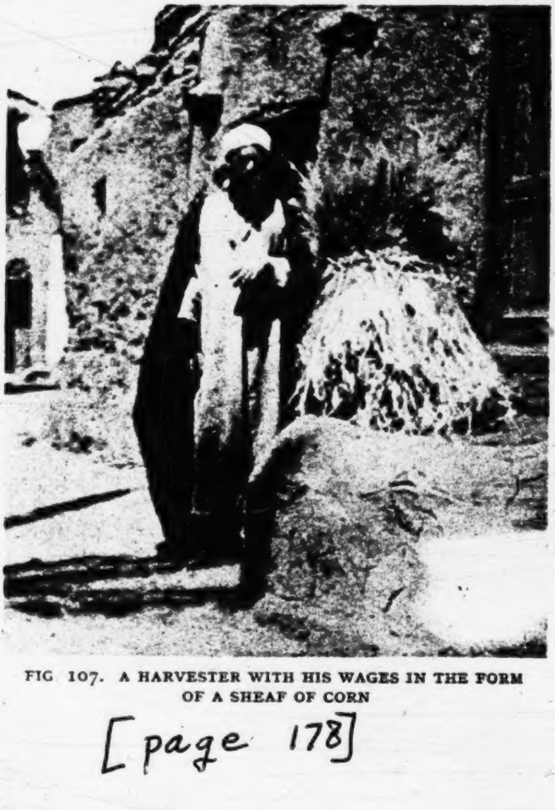

FIG 107. A HARVESTER WITH HIS WAGES IN THE FORM OF A SHEAF OF CORN

[page 178]

THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

174 243 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

465 243 I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. [415] When threshed the corn is usually placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

● [291] [241]

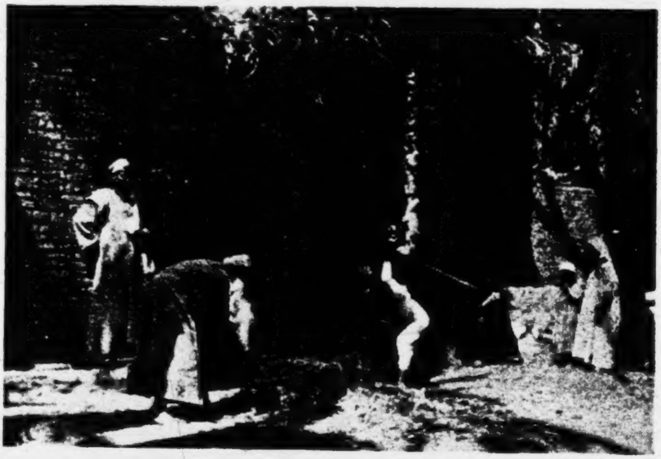

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

down round the grinding stones on to the dirty ground it can hardly be called pure or clean! Fortunately there is in most villages at least one mill worked by steam, and the women take their flour there to be ground for a second time. During this process many of the impurities are removed from the flour.

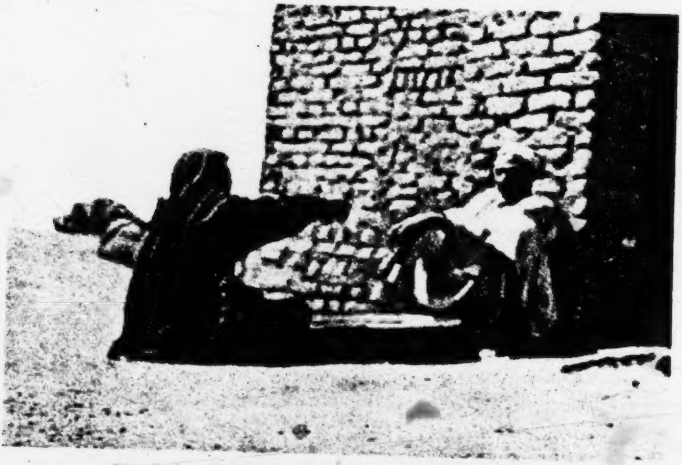

FIG. 110. WOMAN WINNOWING WITH THE HANDS

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[241]

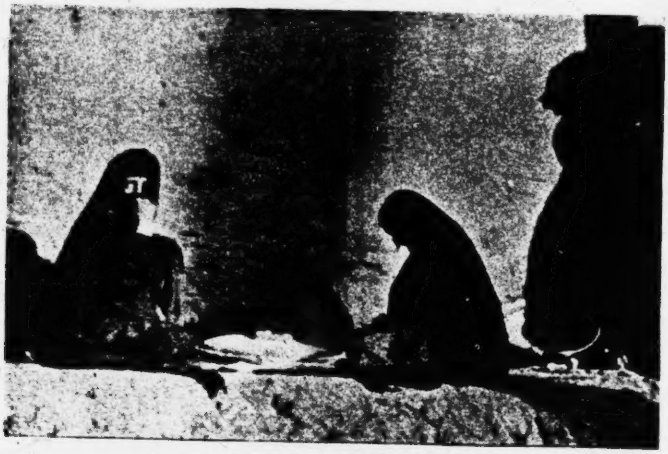

FIG. 111. A HAND-MILL

[251]

CHAPTER XI

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

FROM the earliest times Egypt has been celebrated for its magicians, and accounts of their marvellous achievements have been preserved to us not only in ancient Egyptian records, but in the Bible and in the works of several of the classical writers. Furthermore, many of the tales in the famous collection of stories known as *The Arabian Nights* show what wonder-working powers were attributed to magicians in medieval Egypt. In modern Egypt also magicians abound—in fact, one or more are to be found in almost every village, and they are believed to possess exactly the same powers as did their predecessors in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. 791 175

FIG. 112. A CELEBRATED SHEIKH AND MAGICIAN

[291]

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The modern Egyptian magician, who may be of either sex, is appealed to in all kinds of emergencies. Sometimes his fame has spread far beyond the confines of his own village, and urgent calls for help from distant parts of the country may cause him to travel far afield. I do not think that it is customary for female magicians to go beyond their own or neighbouring villages, but I have known more than one of the male sex whose 'practice' extended over many provinces.

Owing to his knowledge of spells and charms, which may be [554]

791 554 [431] [754] employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

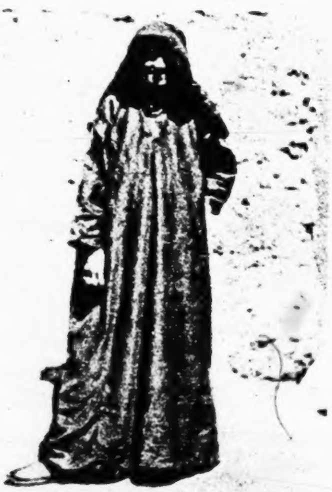

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

791 756 776 787 ● [291] 791 755 787 There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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791 776 Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

791 515 787 776 This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. [291] There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

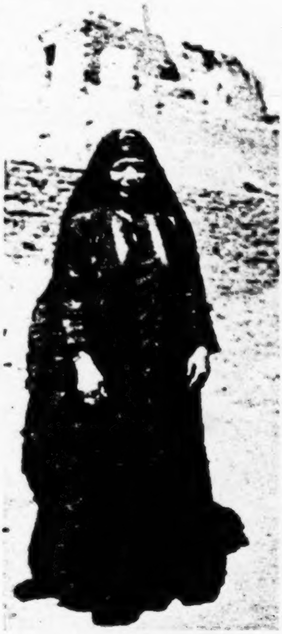

FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

791 782 776 A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

---

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

787 685 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291]
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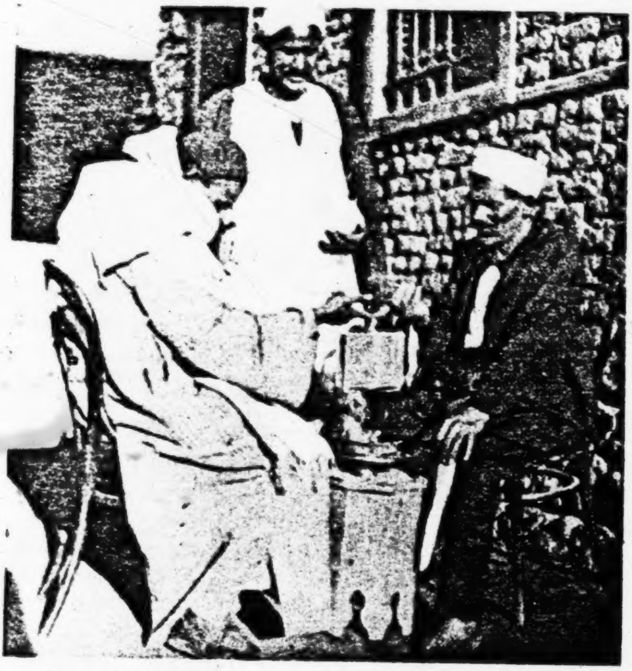

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them. [152] They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

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are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

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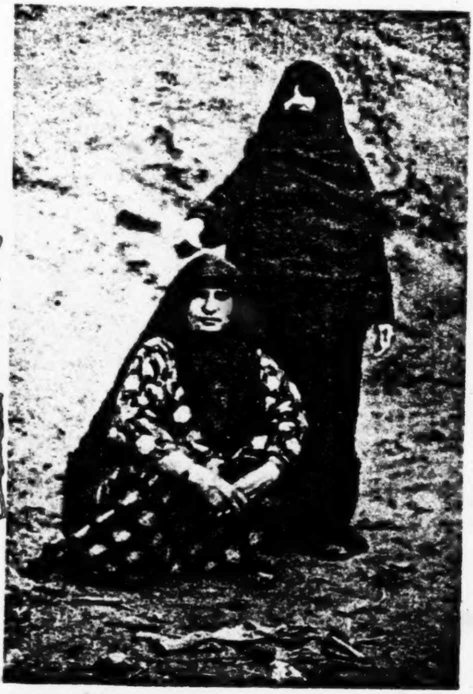

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

757 to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

755 Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, " In the name of God, the Compassionate,
[789] the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pro-
[252] nounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

● [291]

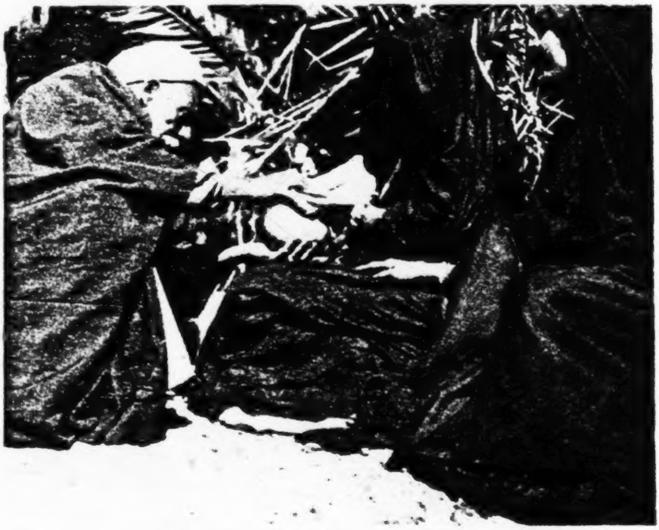

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

The village barber is employed as surgeon by the peasants for most small operations. One of his specialities is blood-letting, which is regarded as a cure for persistent headache. The barber first shaves away the hair adjacent to the forehead, upon which he then makes a series of vertical cuts, extending from temple to temple. The patient bends over a basin in which the blood is caught, and when the bleeding has continued for two or three minutes the barber sponges the forehead with cold water, till the blood ceases to flow (Fig. 128). The peasants show wonderful pluck when undergoing this operation, which must be a very painful one, but they have great faith in the efficacy of this cure. The operation is probably highly beneficial in a hot country like Egypt, as it keeps the people from getting too full-blooded. 759 757

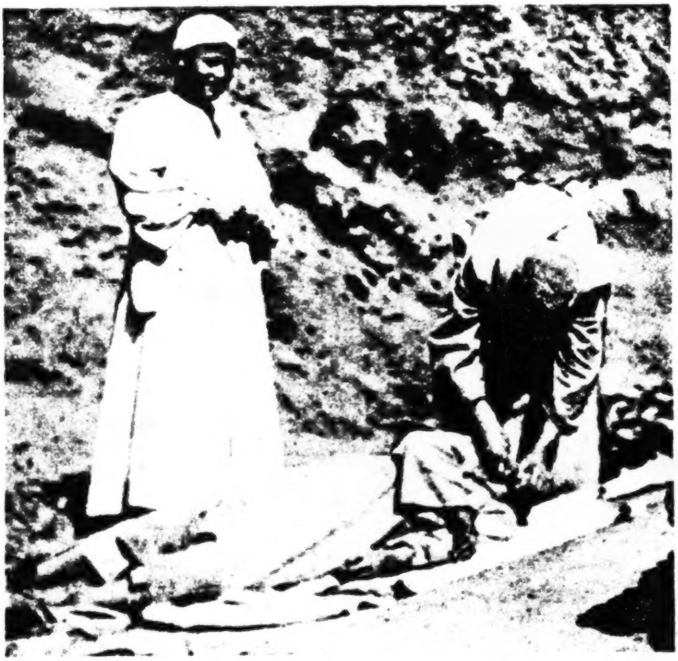

FIG. 127. THE BUTCHER PRETENDING TO CUT THE BOY'S THROAT TO CURE HIM OF HUSKINESS

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Coptic priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims, 000

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756 Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

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759 The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

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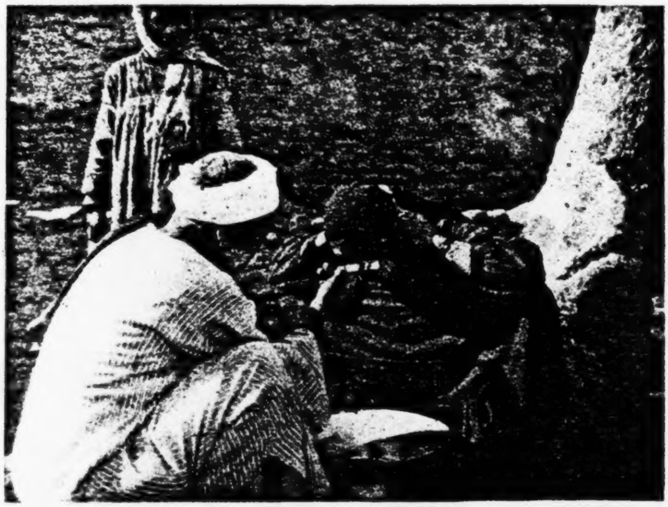

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

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123 When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

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[759]

[Text continued on page 216]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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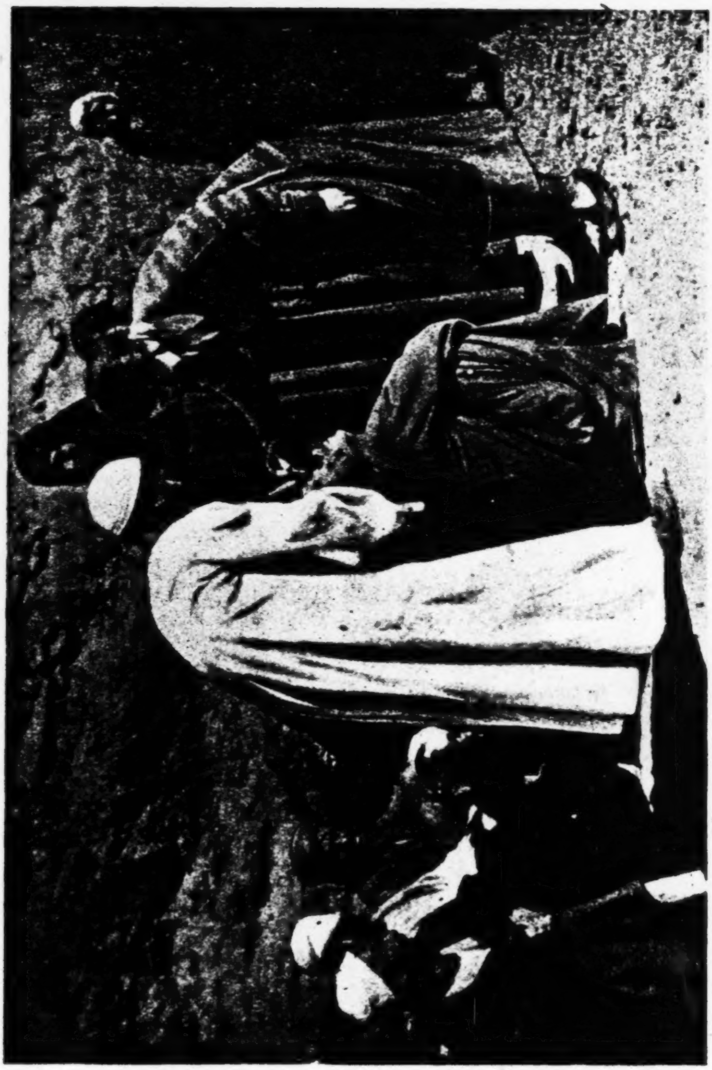

FIG. 129. ATTENDING TO THE EYES OF ONE OF MY PATIENTS

[page 215]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

757 114 123 case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

[232] [241]

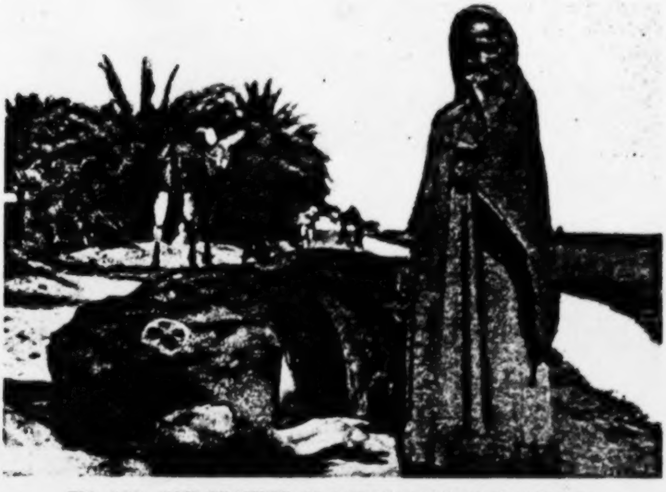

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

744 743 Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

time, and it is most encouraging to hear that the Government is now setting aside certain sums of money with a view to erecting more hospitals. Such a scheme deserves every encouragement and support.

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FIG. 131. SOME OF MY PATIENTS

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ʽAFĀRĪT

The *ʽafārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *ʽafrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessèd ones "), in case there may be *ʽafārīt* near by. For should there be *ʽafārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

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FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *ʽafārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

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A magician is supposed to be able to control *ʽafārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *ʽafārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

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People who are afflicted by *ʽafārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F
THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

782 Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or com-
342 plete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation
241 or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a
312 fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the
776 engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This
is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who
will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of
F a sacrifice.

165 Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery
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● [291]
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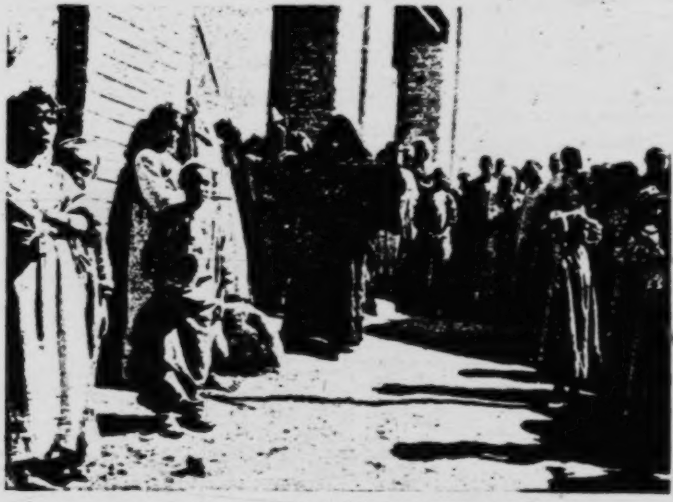

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also
Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived
there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my
F visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left.
782 This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a
776 number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should
kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had
gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the
engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have
C heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

625 There is an old Co[illegible] in that village, considerably over ninety

with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building. 778 775 762

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt. [792] [291]

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass 778 782

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

The boy replied, "Because you have not built me a large tomb, 775
and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

"O my beloved son," said his father, "to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young ʿAli held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

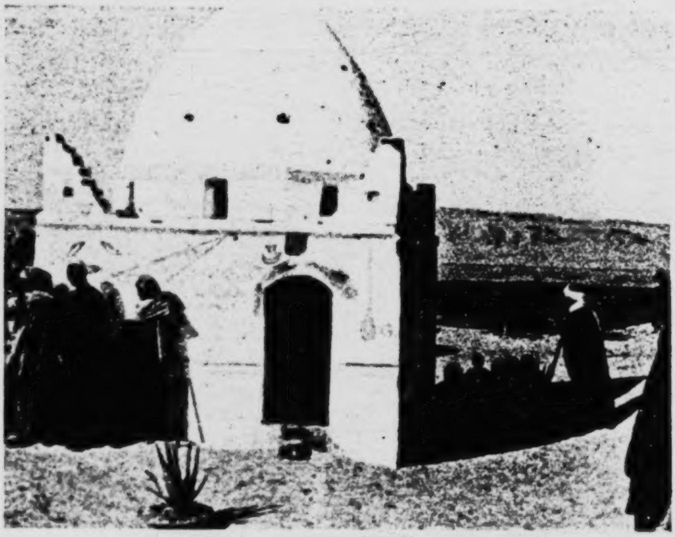

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN ʿALI

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The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the 778
instructions written on the paper presented to old ʿAli by his son. 346
A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is [312]
excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide [775]
awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old ʿAli as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen!

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli's [501]
tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did 000

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

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managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers 796
as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few 769
musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145).

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, F
but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which [625]

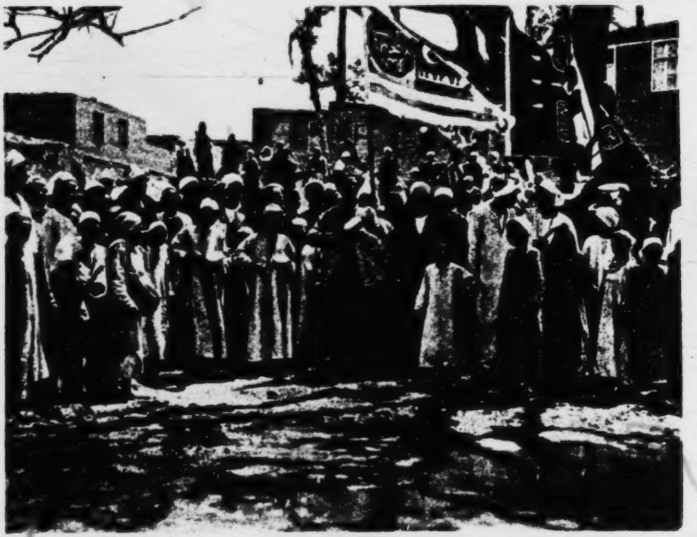

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

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they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to F
English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages [171]
and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour C
they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, 346
which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a 792
number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their 796
dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are 769
identical with those connected with *el-ʿÎd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar*.

The first day of *Khamasîn*, which falls in April and is called 796
Shemm en-Nesîm (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the 789
following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

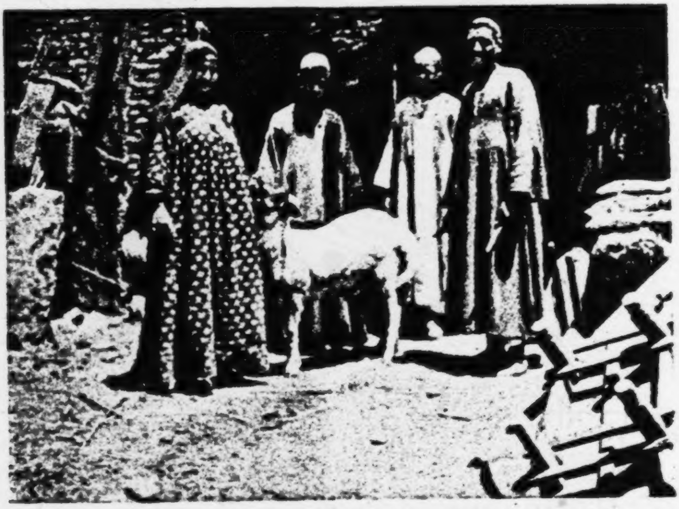

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW
The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal

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796 789 thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

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[515] [823] On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

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796 789 278 On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

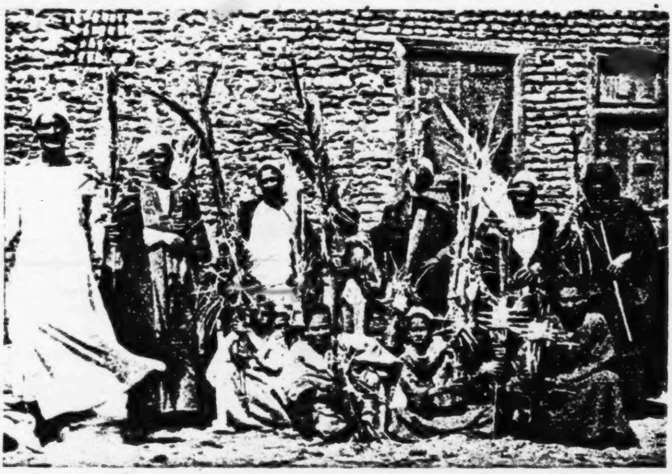

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

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796 On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

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[1] See p. 33.

[2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

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these tales, which he now relates to the people of his village in the evening. He also tells his tales to his customers, who often wait while he is dying the cloth which they have brought him. Thus some tedious hours of waiting are pleasantly whiled away.

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When he first came to me he was somewhat shy, but after a while, seeing that I was really interested, he would start off without hesitation. Sometimes he would consult the schoolmaster as to what he thought would be most to my taste, giving him a short epitome of two or three stories. Then, when a suitable one was chosen, he would go ahead without further delay. Several stories were recited at a sitting, and occasionally I was writing them down for three or four hours on end. Our servants would often stand near, listening in breathless attention as the plot developed.

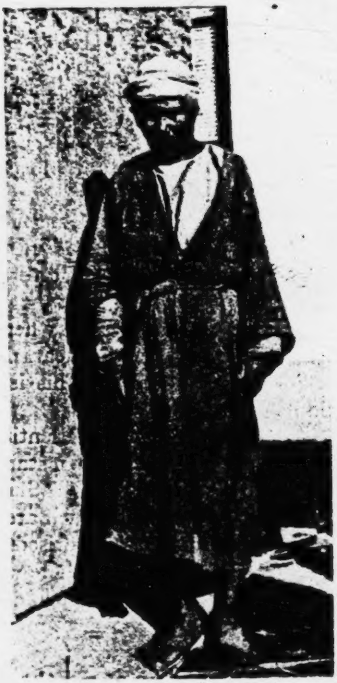

FIG. 153. STORY-TELLER, WHO IS ALSO A WATER-CARRIER BY TRADE

The next year I engaged another man, who was a water-carrier by trade (Fig. 153). I was then living in tents near an out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt, and the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) kindly placed his reception-room at my disposal. Wealthier villagers would drop in from time to time and take a seat at a respectful distance from me, while humbler folk stood at the doorway, or squatted on the threshold, all alike listening enthralled, and from time to time uttering ejaculations of appreciation.

I was assured that these tales had never been committed to writing, but had been handed down orally. It may interest my readers to peruse the following, selected from a large number in my possession.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F A 302

The men's custom of cutting the hair short or shaving their heads entirely (p. 57) is very ancient. Paintings of barbers shaving or cropping men's heads occur in two tomb-chapels of the Middle[1] and in one of the New Kingdom.[2] In the New Kingdom painting (Fig. 157) the barbers are quite clearly plying their trade out of doors, as they so often do at the present day. The well-known *Instruction of Duauf* speaks of the barber shaving " late into the evening, . . . he betaketh himself from street to street in order to seek him whom he may shave."[3]

A [463]

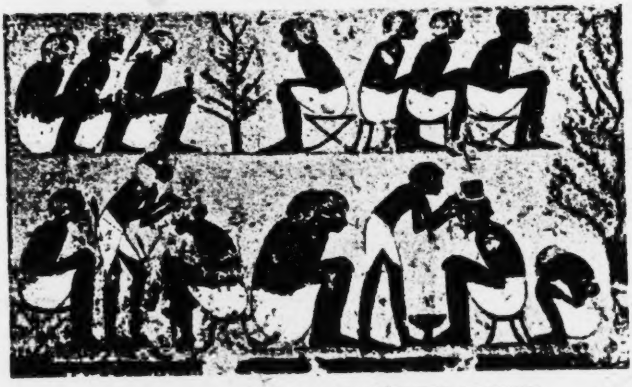

FIG. 157. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BARBERS AT WORK
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 44.

The custom of shaving off the body hair (p. 57) is certainly ancient. Herodotus,[4] it is true, speaks of it only in connexion with the priests, but there is some evidence that it was practised by both sexes, as at the present day.[5] Herodotus[6] tells us that " the Egyptians, on occasions of death, let the hair grow both on the head and on the face, though till then wont to shave." This custom still obtains, as can be seen from my statements on p. 58.

F A [765]

Two articles of clothing, the veil for women and the *gallabiyeh*, may be quite ancient. There is possibly a reference to the former

F A 291

A [113]

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[1] See L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 41; *cf.* also A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 20, Fig. 1; W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 44.

[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[4] ii, 37.

[5] See A. M. Blackman, " Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 481; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 200.

[6] ii, 36.

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in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

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It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

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I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

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It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

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Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

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[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.

[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.

[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.

[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.

[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.

[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.

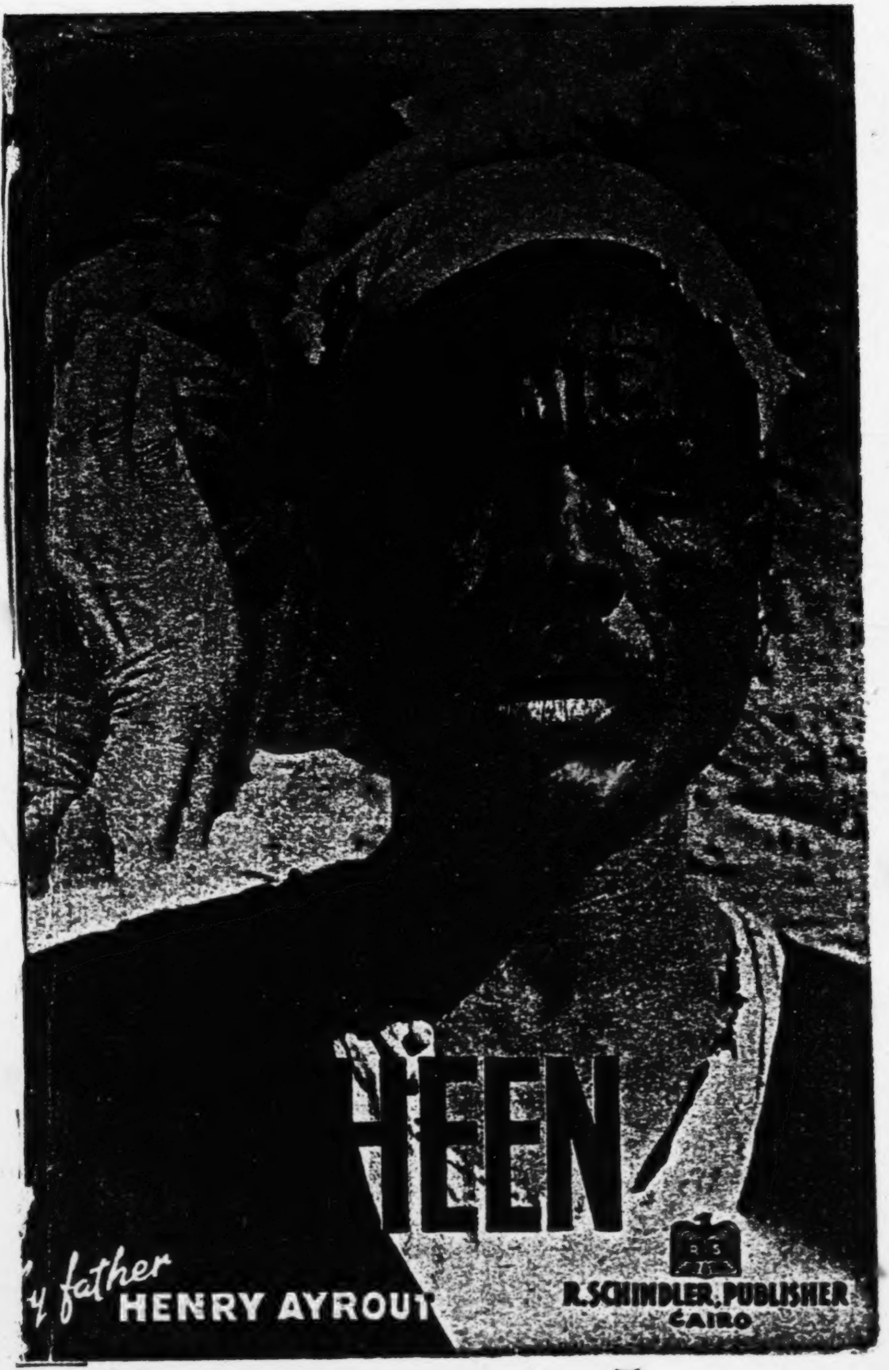
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

[8] Exodus i, 16.

[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

142
291


EEN
y father
HENRY AYROUT
R. SCHINDLER, PUBLISHER
CAIRO

[Front Cover of Book]

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (26)

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For
example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'îdi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from
the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [888]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or
black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [291]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions (30). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering, a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun. This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title. He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious, particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

291 nearly down to the ears. Such a *libda* costs three and a half piastres.

The *gallabiya* is the principal garment. It is a tunic of an indigo blue or whitish colour, made of cotton. It is like a long sleeveless shirt, with no waist, closed up to the breast and reaching to the ankles. (The loin cloth of the Ancient Egyptians disappeared shortly before the time of the Ptolemies.) The sleeves are long, and the cut fairly full. A short opening at the chest reveals the black buttons and stripes of a waistcoat. An adult's *gallabiya* needs five
[463 metres of material (about six yards) at a price of P.T. 3-6 a
465] metre. The tailor gets three piastres for making one up (**).

When at work the fellah tucks up his *gallabiya* above his
291 knees or girds it in at the waist like a blouse, or he may take
461 it off, roll it up and put it aside to serve later as a pillow for his siesta. He then appears dressed in white with a voluminous pair of drawers held up over his hips by a cord and reaching to his knees. His shirt is covered by a waistcoat, but lower down flaps open over the drawers. When it is too hot, he takes off both waistcoat and shirt, and goes about barebacked.

291 His feet, too, are always bare. However, he usually has a rough pair of slippers, made of yellowish leather, which cover his feet to the ankles but are open at the heels. He puts them on for feasts, or after his ablutions. These slippers are locally made, and are called *balgha*.

The boys are naked under their *gallabiya*, which is shorter and lighter in colour than the men's.

Small girls wear a more complicated dress, with waist and bodice. They are often dressed in bright colours or in multicoloured prints. Their hair is always tied up in a muslin kerchief, knotted at the corners. Sometimes, for a veil, they wear a pretty face-towel bought at the market. The women, when they go out, cover their heads and, if they meet a man, the lower part of their faces with a long black veil, glossy or dull, which reaches to the feet and gives them a very graceful outline. In the Qena district this shawl (*milaya*) is dark brown.

The women's dresses, now that imported stuffs have invaded the market, are often brightly coloured. They fit close at neck and wrists, but are not waisted, and usually end in a flounce, which sweeps the ground. Their underclothes

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy
sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India.
Imports from other countries are becoming more and more
insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses
are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps
are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold
just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (41).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big
yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets
made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even
gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze,
silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and
must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else
may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the
family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death
of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the
men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

(3) *Health and Sickness*

● 291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the
elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air
nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environ-
ment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust
142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For
513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most
151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the
foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never
fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest
sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously
upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases
which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic
diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say
nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the
fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are
bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which
in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population.
[515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact
between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia*(11). This is a form of haema-
turia caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system
through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions
[515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare-
744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The
larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747 and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and a doctor to come every week from the town. He has established 744 a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assistant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses, gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-index of each family, and records its progress. She brings the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing, and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the *'ezba* were washing themselves once a week, though they used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515] baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747 *ab'adiya* (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. 361 This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock who has been living and working there for twenty-seven years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342] to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311 They are each allowed one or two feddans for their requirements of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a 241] donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291● a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's [431]

747 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-*
361 *biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by
291 the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the
431 Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four
pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312
515] Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner,
[346
794] who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[759
743] Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152
181] When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

142
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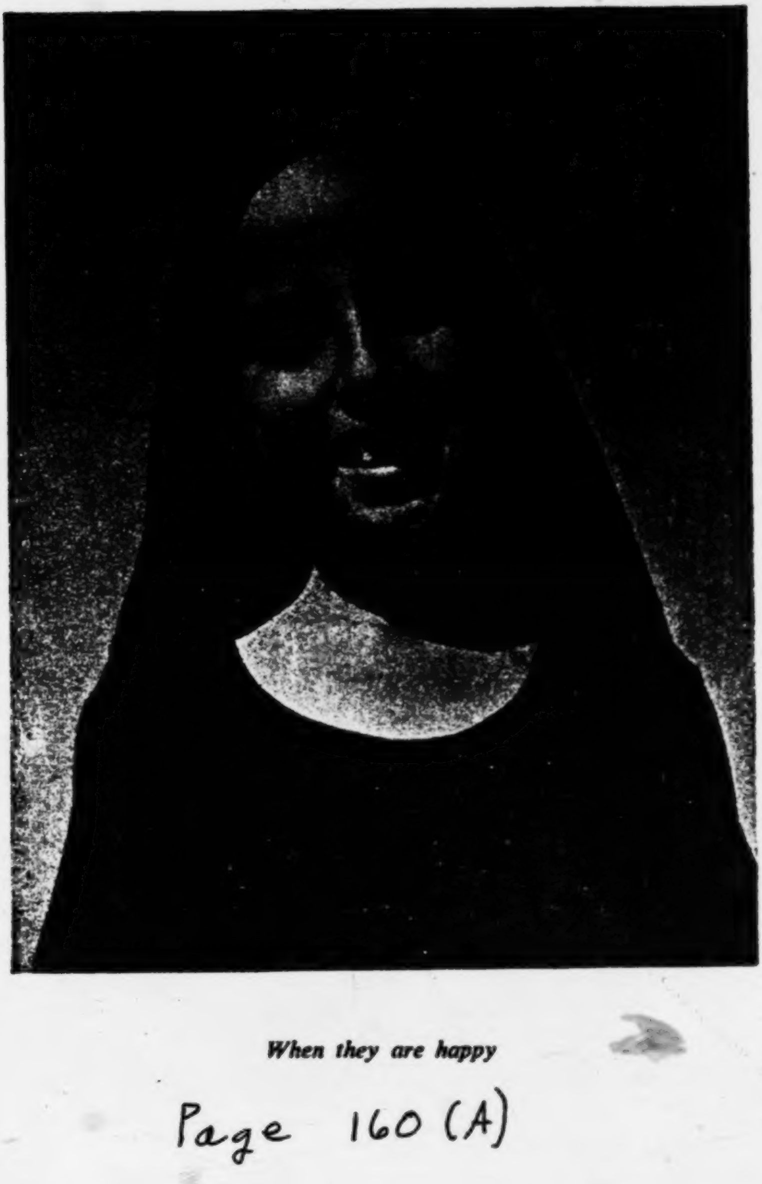


When they are happy

Page 160 (A)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
●291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

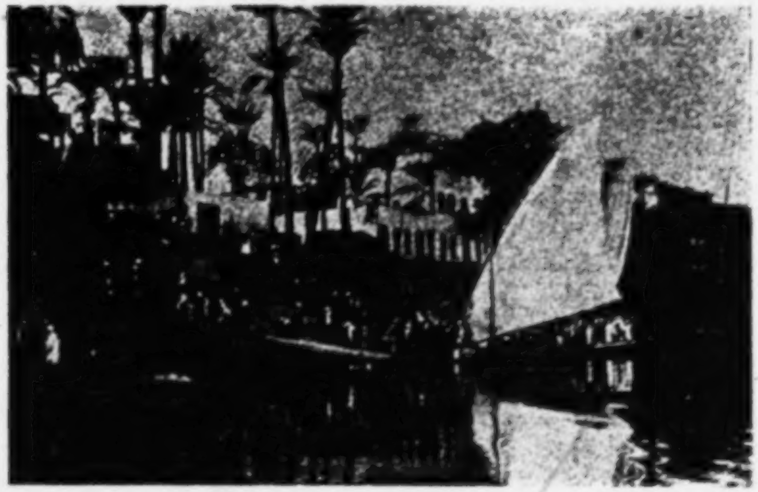
515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet. *The wedding procession*

Page 160 (B)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

A PEASANT GROOP *(Ch VI)*



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A village and ferry on the Nile

291

With them

Page 160(C)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

WORK OF THE FELLAH *(Ch. IV)*

311
474
● 291
133

Digging ditches

248
133

Putting the harvested cotton into sacks

Page 160 (D)

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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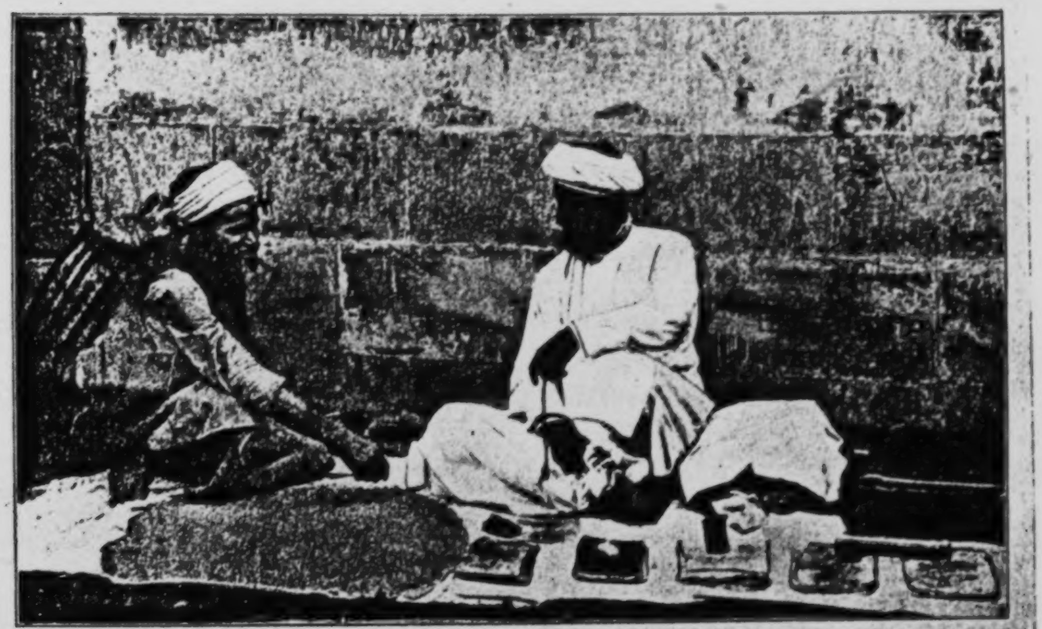

EGYPTIAN GEOMANCER

Seated by the roadside these fortune tellers, who are generally Moslems from North Africa, read the future from the imprint made by the petitioner's hand in dry sand. Rosary and books on magic complete his outfit

Facing p. 35

164 preceding, it is an infectious parasitic disease, and found in very hideous forms. Through neglect of it, and failure to attend to it at the beginning, it baffles physicians and becomes a danger.

757 The thoughts of the "old wives" are perplexed regarding its "cure." Some of them order anointing with petrol; others order tar and other substances. All are profitless. The famous method is "the cap of pitch" [*taḳīyat-al-zift*] in other words, making the pitch (which is the resin of certain coniferæ) flow upon the head of the patient hot, in the form of a skull-cap[1] and leaving it for weeks, nay months. Then the quack comes one day to pull off the cap—a day of distress for the patient!—since his hair, nay his skin also, sticks to the pitch. So he suffers tortures, and blood flows after the terrible uproar of pulling off the cap. Very often the patient faints on account of the intensity [p. 36] of the pain and the great loss of blood. Then after that there is brought half an oke[2] of common salt crystals and the head of the patient is rubbed with them violently.

Do not ask about the pains of this savage method. After a month has passed the "operation" is repeated. There is no need to witness it to know that the second "operation" is more grievous than the first because the healing of the wound is not complete and the new skin is pulled off a second time, and the pains are doubled. In view of all this, say whether this method is advantageous with its violence and danger! Even if this method were successful sometimes, the success would be due solely to the exclusion of the air by means of the cap prescribed against the parasite, because it ranks as a parasite called aerobic, that is "air-loving."

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[291]

[1] [*Ḳalansuwa*, or *ḳulansiya*, the name of a tight-fitting cap often worn under a turban. Tr.]

[2] [See above, p. 111.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Upper Egypt

516
142
302
●291
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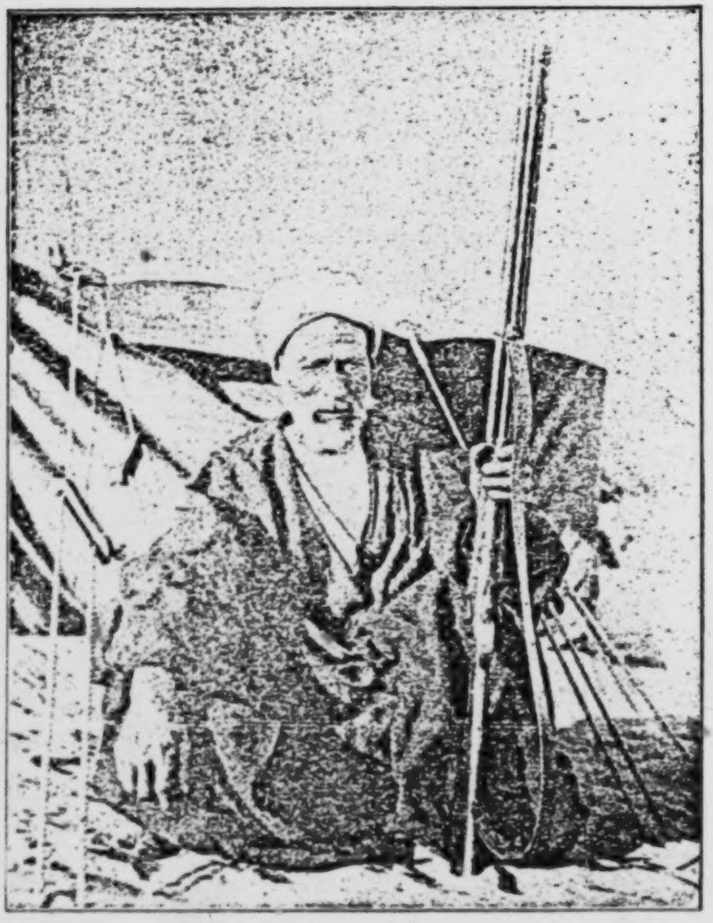

Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Mohammed el-'Itr

Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqâra.

[p. ii] [p. iii is blank]

And the stone was soft for the Prophet, 539
And the roses unfolded for the Prophet, 782
And the pebbles praised God, their Lord:
"All in honor of the Prophet"!

1. "Mine eye" = "My darling"; compare No. 2. Here it is resumed by "boy" in l. 3.

2. The Prophet is the intercessor of man before God, and as such rewards the pious who invoke God's blessing upon him. Compare the same line of thought in No. 5. [776]

3. "The Lord thy God is one God."

4. The pebbles which cover the surface of the desert say: subḥān Allāh, "(I praise) the perfection of God."

7.

The Prophet in the Rose-Garden.

Moḥammed daḫil eg-genēne
wel-wardē ḍallil ʿalê.
Be-ṭarfē šālo el-ʾaṣab,
farado we-ṣalla ʿalê.

Moḥammed entered the garden,
And the roses shaded him.
The edge of his shawl was embroidered in gold.
He spread it and prayed upon it.

2. A love-song of Upper Egypt (Qene?), of which Klunzinger (p. 110) gives a translation, begins thus: "I entered the garden and the roses shaded me".

3. The shawl, which is worn wound about the head, as a turban, often serves as a prayer-rug. No Moslem at prayer, would touch the bare earth. He prays upon a little rug, designed for the purpose; upon his cloak, or, as in this case, upon the shawl of his turban. [298]

14.

Treasures.

539^x

The children are not alone objects of care to their [858] parents, but are also their dearest treasures.

A little urchin speaks to his elder brother:

Ya ḫāi, ḫudni fi-gēbak,
'arne̊ fūl aḫḍar.
Leḥne 'izāze,
we-leḥne bēḍa nikkassar.
5 *Deḥne ḫawātim dahab*
nitḥaṭṭe̊ fil-ḫanṣar.

O brother, put me in thy pocket,
Like a fresh bean-pod.
We are not like glass,
Nor like fragile eggs,
5 But rather, we are gold rings,
To be worn on the little finger.

1. Properly speaking, the peasant has not a pocket, but a [291] pouch on his breast, formed by belting in his garment.

2. The fresh young pods of the fūl (hog's bean) are regarded by the children as a great dainty. Compare No. 4, [262] note on l. 11.

5. A ring is about the only ornament of the fellāḥ, but [301] he is fond of having it seen.

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5 *Rāḥet tekubbĕ-trabha* 539x
we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha. 527
we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd 821
yegīb-liha baškūr ḥadīd,
tiḫbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.

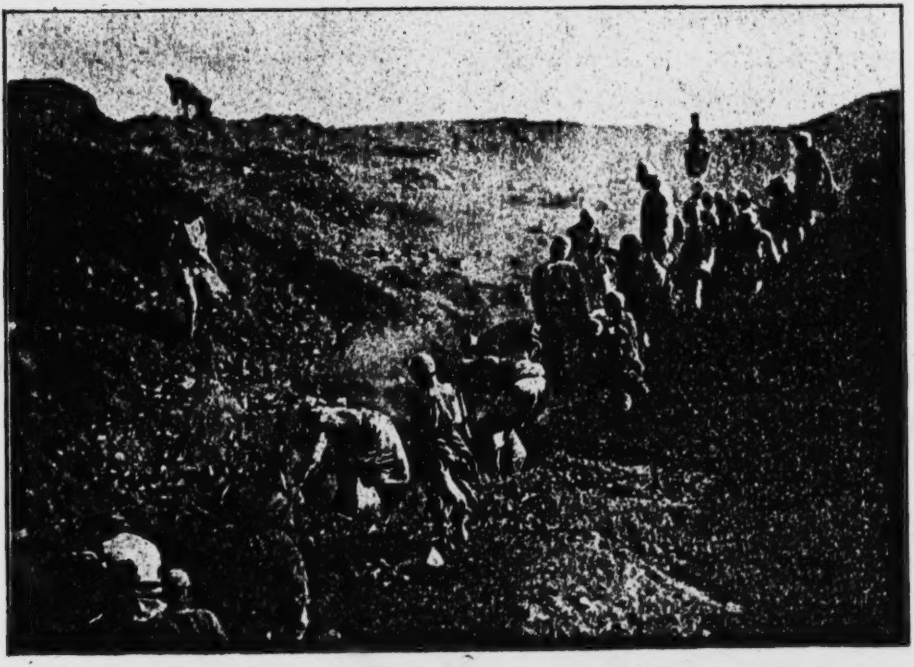
Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
5 She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [291]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyûṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyûṭ is about as far from Saqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

461
291



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

Excavating for papyrus.

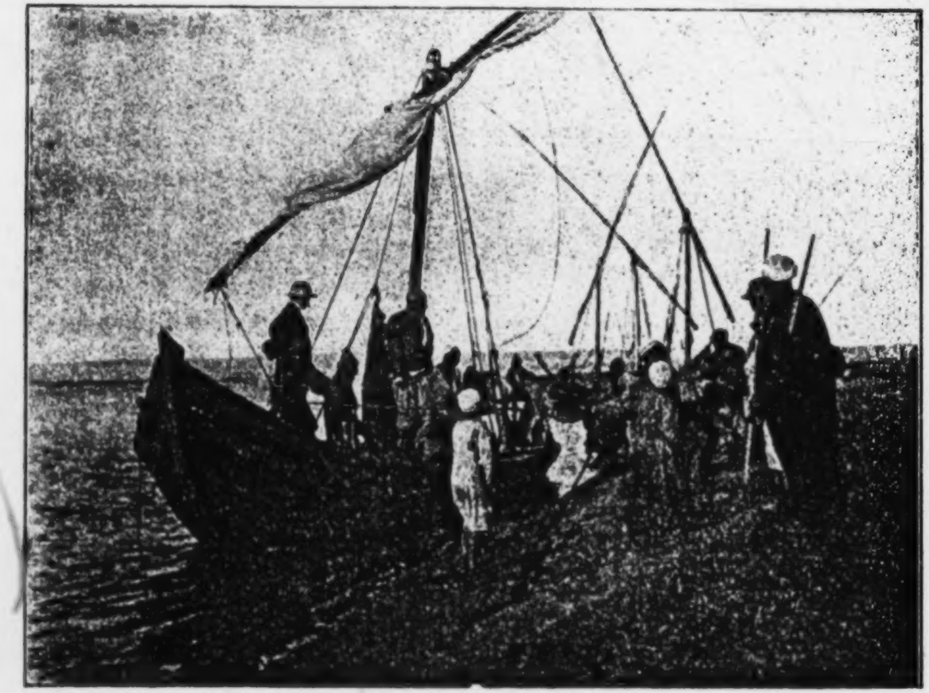
Ehnasye in Middle-Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

35

3

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt



Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau

Ferry-boat in Upper-Egypt.
At Ḥagg Qandil.

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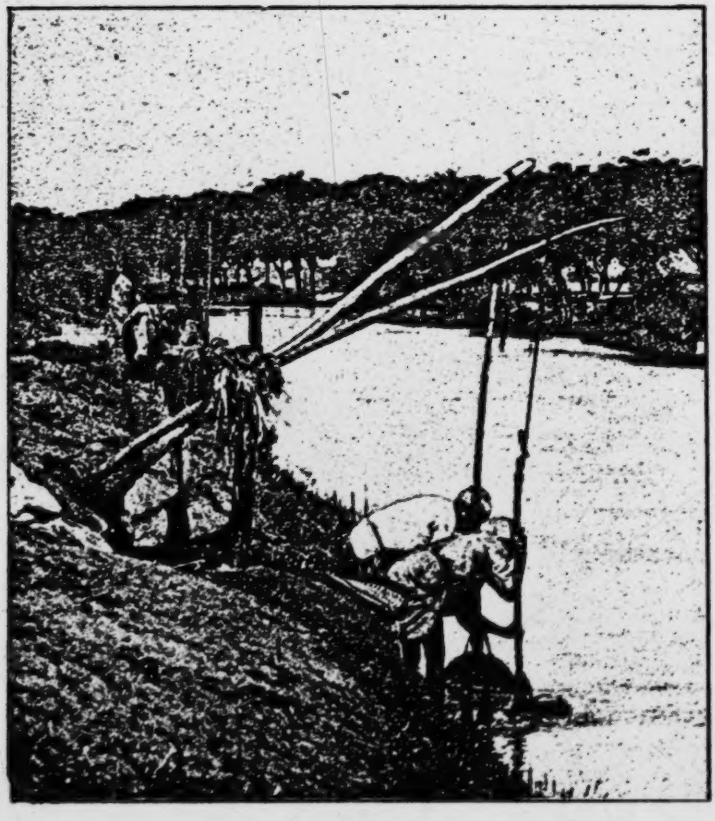
406
291



A Shādûf.

57.

Rallying One's Self.

x539 The payment of a certain sum to the wife, which shall
593 remain her personal property, is one of the indispensable things pertaining to a legal marriage (compare the expression in No. 71, l. 1). The amount of the sum depends, naturally, upon the position and the charms of the bride. The lowest legally allowed sum, is about a dollar and a quarter (five shillings).

A pretty example of a poor peasant poking fun at himself. The dowry which he is able to command is no more than [435] the price of a skull-cap, namely: seven and a half cents (four pence).

Yabu libde, ya fellāḥ, yāne!
wana biddi āḫod Behāne
waddīha nuṣṣ el-’abḍīye,
wel-bā’i agib bo ṭā’iye.

O I with the felt cap, I, the peasant!
I wish to marry Behāne!
And I will give her the half of my wages,
And with the rest I will buy me a skull-cap.

291 1. Libde is the thick, closely fitting, felt cap, which the poor peasants wear. Usually it is of coarse, brown felt. Abu-libde, "father (that is: wearer) of the libde" is a frequent term of derision for a peasant.

3. Another said: nuṣṣ ed-damkīye.

4. Ṭā’īye is the white, knitted or crocheted, likewise closely fitting, little cap, which the men wear underneath the felt-cap.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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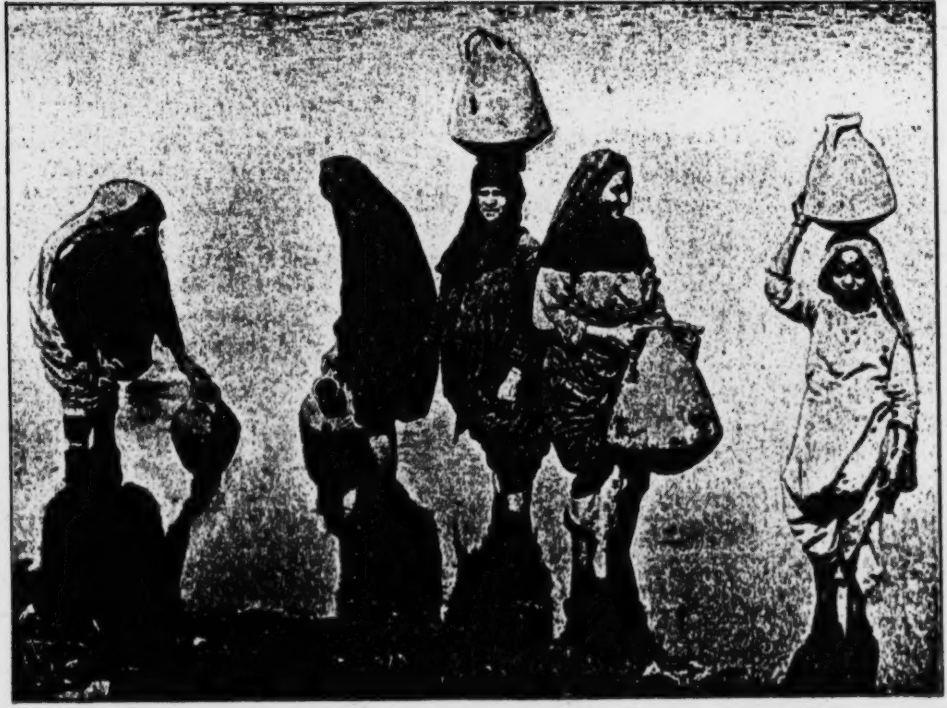

Women Drawing Water.

x539
832

80.

Caution.

Ya munyati, gūdi
u-kīdi-l-ʿazūl,
wirḫi ḍalāl šaʿrik
yeṛaṭṭi-n-nehūd,
5 *widdīni bōse u-gūd!*
ʾal-li: ana ḫāif
tiṭmaʿ teʿaddi-l-ḥodūd!

O thou my desire, be generous
And outwit the watcher!
Loosen the veil of thy hair,
That it may cover thy breasts,
5 And give me a kiss and be generous!
Then she said to me: I fear,
Thou desirest to overstep the bounds!

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2. The watcher, who prevents lovers from meeting, plays a large part in oriental love-songs. This is explained by the strict watch which is kept over the women and girls. In the country this vigilance is not as strict toward women who are not especially attractive, as it is in the city. The further one goes from Cairo, the less one sees of veiled women.

[834]
[184]
[291]

The Charmer.

x539
832

93.

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
u-ʻala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
libiset ʻuṣēbe wimradde,
witmaiyilet ʻal-muḫadde.
5 *sabbalit ʻiyūn el-muḥabbe,*
ma laḥe'tiš alaggam ḥoṣāni.

[302] O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love (thee).
She wore a fillet and a gay-colored bodice,
And leaned upon the cushion.
5 She drooped her alluring eyes, —
Then I had no time to curb my steed.

1. We would say: Thy beautifully painted eyes have fettered me.

2. Compare with this strange construction in the Arabic, No. 5, l. 2.

[291] 3. The ʻuṣēbe is a little scarf, which is wound about the head like a fillet. The meradde is the gay-colored front of a vest-like garment.

5. She sends him an alluring, languishing glance from her half-closed eyes.

94.

539ˣ
832

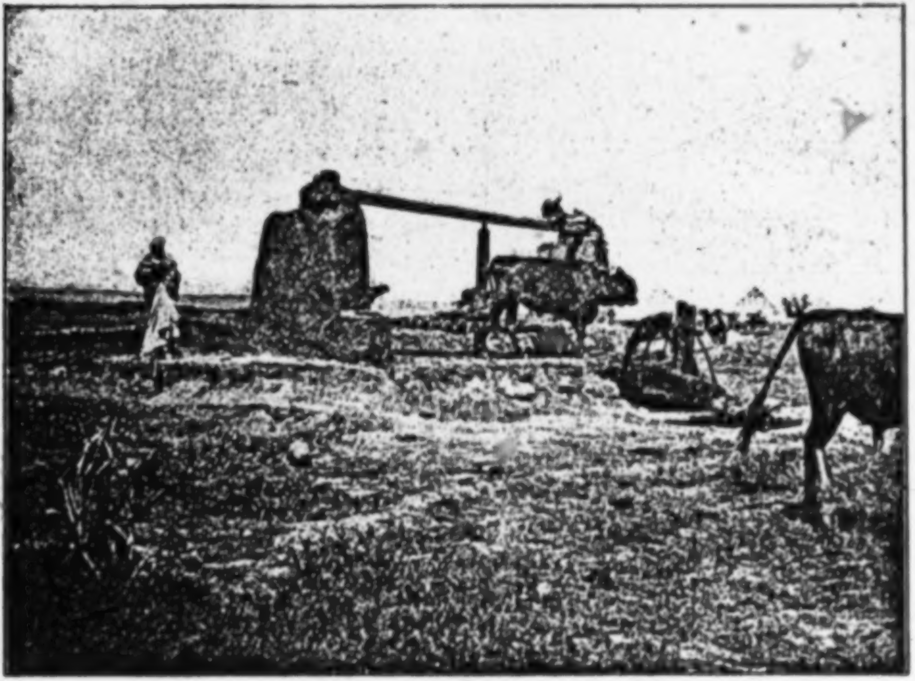
Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
‘ala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
El-bēḍa libiset dabūli
weš-šāṭeḥ wel-‘o’d el-lūli.
5 *‘ala mir-rāḥ u-gābû-li*
wašṭaḥ-bo nuṣṣ el-layāli.

O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love thee.
The white one wore silk,
And the shāṭeḥ and the necklace of pearls. [301]
5 Who will go and bring her to me? —
That I may recline with her at midnight!

1. Compare No. 93, l. 1.

4. Shāṭeḥ is a head-dress of gold or silver coins sewed in a row on the border of a piece of cloth, so that they lie on the forehead from temple to temple. (Almkvist, Kleine Beitraege p. 354.) Other kinds of head-dress however, are known by this name. (Lane II, p. 356.) [291]

231
406
291



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Sāqye Near the Great Pyramids.

101.

Near the Goal.

×539

Ḥaiya, yabnĕ 'ammi,
ḥaiya, ya dalîl!
Win gāni ibnĕ 'ammi,
lašāwar bi-kummi
wa'ul: yabnĕ 'ammi,
faragallâh 'arīb.

Up, cousin,
Up, [my] beloved!
And when my cousin comes to me,
I will signal to him with my sleeve,
And say: Dear cousin,
The joy of Allah is near!

1. Regarding "cousin", see Nos. 87; 96.
2. Maḥmûd explained dalîl as ḫaṭib muḫbir.
● [291] 4. The sleeves are full and hang down over the hands.
[581] 6. The joy which Allah sends, namely: our union.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

105. (The Poor.)

x539
554
574

Win gāni abu libde,
la'ul-lo: rūḥ, kide,
ya 'alīl ez-zō', ya ḫēb er-raga!
rūḥ taḥt el-behāim
5 *we-šīl waḥlāt iš-šite!*

But if someone with a felt cap comes to me
I will say to him: "Get out of the way; so!
Thou unpolished, miserable fellow!
Go among the cattle
5 And cart off the winter's dung!"

---

[291]

[1] The felt cap is the head-covering of the poor peasants (see No. 56).

[2] So! accompanied by a motion of the hand.

[3] Miserable, literally: disappointed in his hopes.

109.

Progress.

539×

The gallābiye is a cotton, shirt-like garment, reaching to the feet or a little above. It is mostly worn gathered up by means of a belt. It is worn by both men and women. [291]

Ah yāna wez-zemān hannāni,
yabu gallābîye, wez-zemān hannāni.
Ruḥt lil-faṣṣal yefaṣṣalha-li,
ruḥt lil-ḫaiyaṭ yeḫaiyaṭha-li,
5 *ruḥt labūye yelabbisha-li*
we-ruḥt lil-ʿarīs ye'allaḥha-li.

Oh, how good time has been to me,
I, with the gallābīye, time has been good to me!
I went to the cutter to have him cut it for me, [294]
I went to the tailor to have him sew it for me,
5 I went to my father, to have him put it on me,
And I went to my bridegroom, to have him pull it off me. [585]

Sweet Medicine.

110.

x539

Yammâ tōb ṣāfi we-šbēka welwān
weš-šiffa-l-ḥamra lam tiṛzil kittān
wil-ʿēn es-sōda lam tiḥmil duḫḫān.

Yammâ tōb ṣāfi, ya šarak el-hawa,
5 *u-šaʿrik laṣfar yilʿab-bo-l-hawa,*
u-ṣiḥnî nhūdik waṣafû-li dawa.

● [291] O thou, with the light outer garment and the hair-net and the gay clothes,
And the red lip, which has not had to spin flax,
And the black eye, which has not had to endure smoke.

O thou with the light outer garment, thou catch-net of love!
5 The wind plays with thy yellow hair,
And the plate of thy breasts has been prescribed as medicine for me.

1. Under the black, transparent, outer garment, the women wear a gay — usually red or yellow — dress of calico or finer material. Maḥmûd wished elwān = "the colors", understood as applying to this garment.

117.

Light Minded.

x539 *Ummāli ē? ummāli ē?*
āḫod el-fellāḥ: aʿmil-bo ē?
āḫod el-gindi
abu šāl hindi.
5 *Hāwa yeṛanni*
wanarudd ʿalē.

Of course, what else? Of course, what else?
If I take the peasant, what shall I do with him?
I will take the soldier
With the Indian shawl.
5 He shall sing
And I shall answer him.

118.

Dost Thou Think of Me?

Yasmar, yabu ʿēn ʿasalīye,
garḥê hawāk ilmakkan fīye.
Yasmar, yabu-l-libās eṣ-ṣīni,
ana ʿala bālak wala-nte nāsini.

Thou brown one, with the honey-brown eyes,
The wound of thy love is fast fixed in me.
[291] Thou brown one with the dainty drawers,
Dost thou remember me, or hast thou forgotten me?

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[263] 1. Egyptian honey is much darker than ours.
[117] 2. Literally: "Chinese under drawers". Chinese is used here as Indian is in Nos. 56 and 117.